



NIXON NEWS

Nixon PTA Newsletter—Vol. 2005-2006 Issue No.7—December 9, 2005
The L.M. Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 (650) 856-1622 <http://www.nixon.pausd.org>

CALENDAR

Tues. Dec. 13
Cookie Exchange
2:20-6:30 p.m.

Thurs. Dec. 15
Holiday Brunch
10:00 a.m.

Fri. Dec. 16
Minimum Day
Dismissal at 1:30 p.m.
No enrichment classes

Mon.-Mon. Dec. 19-Jan. 2
Winter Break

Tues. Jan. 3
School Resumes

Wed. Jan. 4
Quakes & Shakes Assembly

Fri. Jan. 6
PTA Executive Board Mtg.
8:15 a.m.

Mon. Jan. 9
Site Council Meeting
2:40 p.m.

NEXT PUBLICATION

DATE: January 13

DEADLINE:

Friday, January 6 at 5 p.m.

Principal: Barbara Welch

PTA President: Tracy Stevens

Editor: Sharon Dally

Layout: Liz Fendorf

Principal's Corner by Barbara Welch

Dear Nixon Families,

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving Holiday and enjoyed the extra day. I know it gave me some extra cooking time before the feast.

Practicing Cooperation

Last year the staff began discussing and planning a student Lifeskills program based on four concepts: friendship, cooperation, resilience, and responsibility. Several teachers and support staff head up a school-wide committee that plans classroom activities and school-wide assemblies. If you look up carefully on the perimeter of the computer lab and library you will see one of our ongoing activities. These are footprints with student names and the acts of friendship they have per-

formed. We will continue to build on this all year. Last Wednesday, we had a short assembly on cooperation where there were brief student presentations and then the entire student body broke into groups. Each group reconfigured with a teacher and went to a classroom to participate in a teambuilding and cooperation activity. First, the purpose was to have students work with children and staff outside of their classroom. This stretches them a bit and increases their friendships. Secondly, they were involved in an activity that requires cooperation. This is the first time we have used these group configurations, but we plan to do this a couple of times during the year to continue enlarging their circle of friends and examine other lifeskills.

Continued on Page 2

PTA President's Message by Tracy Stevens

Winter got off to a resounding start with our first big storm last Thursday. This also happened to be Family Night at the Book Fair. Despite the wind and rain, many folks got in their cars and took part in the Storytelling event. The 5th grade students provided hot chocolate and goodies while the Girl Scouts offered festive gift wrapping services. Many thanks to Sylvia Sanders (Book Fair Chair) and Ih-Hae Chang (co-chair) and the many others who volunteered their time to bring us a very successful Book Fair. For the last three years, this being her last year, Sylvia has

been the Book Fair Chair, and under her guidance it has been one of the highlights for Nixon every year. We would like to say Thank You to Sylvia for all her time and efforts and for leaving the Book Fair in good hands with Ih-Hae taking the Chair position for next year.

There are two ways that families can contribute financially to help improve the curriculum and educational experience at Nixon. One way is to donate to Partners in

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 Sandra Nadim si usted desea añadir su nombre a la lista de distribución.

Principal's Corner *continued from page 1*

Why Do Some Students Get Out at 1:30p.m. on Friday?

Over seven years ago, the parent community and Nixon staff realigned our instructional time to better support students and staff. Intermediate teachers receive more PE and Music release time than primary teachers, so in order for all teachers to have the same amount of release time, additional release time must be found for primary teachers. We could give primary students an afternoon recess each day to provide their teacher with release time, but this would infringe on optimum learning time. Instead, it was decided as a community that we would provide all the release time on one day. We selected Friday, when young students are the least attentive. It was also reasoned that a block of common time would benefit curriculum planning and collaboration for grade level teachers. All students who ride the bus must be supervised until 2:20 p.m. and thus the birth of YMCA supervised play. All other students must go home or attend an enrichment class. Therefore, all students in grades 1-3 must be in one of the following places from 1:30-2:20 p.m. on Fridays: YMCA (they must be registered), an enrichment class (a parent contract with an outside provider), or go home. Students may stay out on the playground with adult supervision. This means the caregiver must be in the immediate vicinity of the student. These rules and procedures are in place to make all students safe. Sometimes we forget to remind new families how and why we do something a certain way. I hope this is a clarification for some and reminder for others.

To Help You Plan

The Palo Alto Children's Theater will be auditioning parts for *Cinderella*, a Nixon presentation, in the middle of February for an end of March presentation. The parts will be open to third through fifth graders. You may need this information to help you decide whether to take an after school enrichment class second semester. The play rehearsals will be several days a week, Tuesday-Friday, de-

pending on the student's role.

Toy Drive

For the last several years, Nixon has participated, on a voluntary basis only, in the annual holiday toy drive sponsored by the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto. We plan to do so again this year. 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. In December, Urban Ministry provides new toys to qualified families that live within Palo Alto city limits or have children who attend a PAUSD school. 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. The first day of the toy drive is Tuesday, December 6th, and we will deliver the toys to Urban Ministry on Thursday, December 15th. If this is something your family is interested in supporting, consider making it a meaningful experience for your child by involving him/her in the selection and purchase process. Donations need not be large or expensive, but thoughtful. Please do not wrap the gifts.

The staff at Nixon wishes each of you a relaxing, enjoyable Winter Break, and we will be looking forward to seeing you in 2006.

Barbara

Holiday Brunch

A Nixon PTA Sponsored Event

The Holiday Brunch is a thank you celebration for teachers and volunteers. It will be held on Thursday, December 15 during the morning break at 10:00 a.m. in the teachers' lounge. Come and show your appreciation to teachers and staff for their work this semester. Parents, please bring your favorite or holiday-related dish to the teachers' lounge before 9:45 a.m. that day. Please e-mail Karen at o let her know what you will bring - an appetizer, main dish, side dish, or desserts. Be sure to put your name on all the dishes and utensils and pick them up afterward. Thank you for your help. See you there!

President's Message *continued from page 1*

Education (PiE), a district-wide effort and the only way to fund teaching specialists/additional staff at every school. The other funding avenue is to donate directly to the Nixon PTA. Since the holidays are often connected to "giving," I thought it would be appropriate to let you know how your contributions to the PTA have recently improved Nixon and say Thank You for your support and generosity.

Several issues ago (issue #3, September 30), we printed a chart of how the PTA funds are spent. Just recently the PTA provided funds for the staff/teacher top requests:

- Every class will now have a DVD/VCR player.
- The purchase of a Die Cut machine for classroom/teacher projects.
- Additional support (chairs/extended insurance/instructional plans) for the computer lab.
- Announcement Sign for the Tolman entrance of the school. (The sign in the front of the school has been so successful that a second one is being added for all those parents who use the back school entrance. It can also be easily seen by all the students every day.)
- Increased financial support for Noon Art (a very popular lunchtime enrichment program).
- The purchase of permanent music stands for the Music Program (see more about this on page 6).

- The construction of planter boxes outside every classroom. This is an Eagle Scout project, financed by the PTA, to build attractive, sturdy planter boxes to be used at teacher/classroom discretion to encourage responsibility of the students and learn more about plant care and maintenance. Construction should begin soon.

As mentioned above, the other funding avenue is to support PiE. If you have not yet made a contribution to PiE, please consider it before the end of the year; this will apply to this year's taxes and help to reach a matching grant, which is now in effect and applies to increased participation at individual school locations. If you have any questions about PiE or your donation, please contact Dianne Vernon.

In just one week the school will be out for Winter Break (a 17 day vacation). This will mean something different to everyone; take a trip, visit with family, catch up with friends, sleep-in, eat too much, get much needed rest, read a good book, just relax.

The Nixon PTA would like to wish everyone a safe and sound **Holiday Season.**

Tracy

Fill Your Cookie Jar with Cookies from Around the World!

Tuesday, December 13th

Nixon Multipurpose Room, 2:20–6:30 p.m.

This year the Nixon PTA Just For Fun Committee and our generous 2nd grade families will bring you a delightful event – *A World of Cookies*. Stop by the Multipurpose Room after school on Tuesday, December 13 and select from a beautiful and delicious assortment of homemade cookies. Sip warm apple cider, visit with your friends, and bring home a box of cookies to enjoy with your family.

For only \$10.00, payable at the door, you will receive an empty box to fill with marvelous cookies of your choice. Be warned, cookies may be sold out before 6:30 p.m. Please come early for the best selection.

Funds raised at Just For Fun events directly support our children through PTA school programs. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Kindergarten Registration

It's time to start thinking about registering for Kindergarten 2006-07. Open registration is from January 3 to February 2. Make sure you register before February 3! Visit the district website (www.pausd.org) for more information.

Below is Nixon's list of incoming siblings, based on information from our current students' emergency cards. If we have missed listing your child or you plan not to send your child to Kindergarten next year, please notify the Nixon office as soon as possible. (Note that even if your child is on this list, you still need to register him or her with the district office.) Siblings have priority but must register between January 3 and February 2, 2006. It is very important not to miss this deadline.

*** Sibling list has been omitted for privacy reasons.*

***If you live outside the Nixon boundaries, please contact the office about filing an intra district transfer for this sibling.**

PTA Minutes in Brief

At the PTA meeting held on November 14 at 11:30 a.m. in the Nixon Theater:

- Linda Lenoir, the district nurse, presented the PAUSD head lice policy. She described the district's "no nit" policy; if there are no nits present in a child's hair, then the child may attend school. Classroom Volunteer Coordinators will recruit two parent volunteers from each classroom who will go through lice check training given by Linda on Dec 1st. Lice checks will be held the week before Winter and Spring breaks.
- It was reported that teacher membership in the PTA has increased to 16.
- A "Just for Fun" update was given by Denise Provost. The Just for Fun effort, (taking the place of the yearly auction,) is events and/or parties for sale at a fixed price to parents/students. A notebook in the library contains a list of suggested parties. Teachers and parents from each grade level will host a party. Sales will begin at the Book Fair on November 30th.
- A proposal of approximately \$16,000 of expenditures for teachers and staff requests was approved. The requested items were a die cut machine and dies, extended computer warranties, additional computer lab chairs, 12 VCR/DVDs, 3 CD players, a school announcement sign, planter boxes, and an increase in the noon art budget.

The next PTA meeting will be held February 7 at 11:30 a.m. The meeting is open to all interested parents and teachers. Special guests will be newly elected school board members Barbara Mitchell and Dana Tom.

“I Can Do That!”

If you have ever: signed up for a Just For Fun event, purchased a book at the Book Fair, registered for eScrip, ordered giftwrap, paid membership dues, or made a donation of any size, then you have an interest in seeing that PTA funds are well-managed.

Gioia Allegretti has been our PTA treasurer for the last two years, ably overseeing a total budget of over \$100,000. Gioia is the mother of 5th grader A. and 1st grader W. She works full-time as a software consultant, yet still manages to find time to volunteer in both classrooms at least an hour a week (during her lunch hour) as well as serving as PTA treasurer. The next time you see her at a Nixon event, please be sure to thank her for her outstanding contributions to our school.

While Gioia will undoubtedly find other ways to be involved in the future, term limits in our by-laws prevent her from continuing as treasurer. Might you be the person to step into her shoes?

Duties of the treasurer include maintaining financial records, writing checks for all approved reimbursement requests, reporting on financial status to the PTA Executive Board and general membership, balancing the checking account, and taking a lead role in the budget development process. The treasurer also prepares (or oversees the preparation of) the yearly tax return and ensures that all of our financial dealings comply with IRS requirements for maintaining our tax-exempt status.

Gioia estimates she spends about two hours per week main-

taining the records and writing checks, plus an additional 5 hours per month creating reports, balancing the accounts, and attending executive board meetings. Some familiarity with spreadsheets and financial management software (currently using Quickbooks), along with good organizational skills, is required. Training is available through the Palo Alto PTA Council, and of course Gioia will be available advise you.

Gioia comments, “I have enjoyed being the treasurer because I can do most of the work at home, and yet I know that I am helping provide Nixon with great programs that my children enjoy. The PTA really helps make Nixon Elementary a great educational community and provides a superb environment for our children. Being the PTA treasurer really helps me feel I have a hand in providing this great environment. If you like spreadsheets and balancing your checkbook (and I know there are people out there that do)...Please consider being the Nixon PTA Treasurer. It’s a super important role that lets you feel in control (numbers never talk back).”

Treasurer is one of those critical jobs that we absolutely must fill in order to have a PTA. Hopefully by now you’re saying, “I can do that!” Please step up to the plate; volunteer to serve as treasurer next year by contacting Tracy Stevens (at 493-2207 or trastevens@earthlink.net). **Nixon PTA needs YOU!**

PTA Positions Previously Profiled in *Nixon News* and Still Unfilled

- ◆ Nominating Committee (profiled October 21) - still need two alternates
- ◆ *Nixon News* Editor (profiled November 4)
- ◆ Parliamentarian (profiled November 18)

Previous profiles can be found in the *Nixon News* archive on the school website at <http://www.nixon.pausd.org/news.htm>.

Just For Fun Update A Nixon PTA Sponsored Program

The Just For Fun Kick-Off at the Book Fair is now over, and as anticipated some of the more popular events are now full, but don't fret, because several of the events have a few openings and some of the larger events still have many openings. So it is not too late to have everyone participate. Just For Fun would like to thank Mary Jude Doerpinghaus and Kathryn Gray, who hosted *The Winter Cookie Decorating* event where students were entertained by decorating winter cookies and gift bags to give to others. It was a wonderful event.

On the horizon, prior to the winter break, we have the *World of Cookies* scheduled for Tuesday, December 13th. Please see the article on page 3 for more details. We hope to see everyone there.

Another activity that accommodates a large group is our *Nixon at Twisters* event on December 17th, starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending at 9:45 p.m. You can pick up earlier if this late hour is not good for you. At this event, hosted by 3rd grade parent Kristi Hamlin, you can drop off or watch as your child gets almost two hours of gym time and rock climbing time. The professional staff at Twisters will be supervising. To sign up, use either one of the following methods:

- ◆ Open the EVITE invitation that was sent to your e-mail address. It includes a PayPal link to make payment easy.
- ◆ Bring a check made out to Nixon PTA (please include your child's name on the memo line) or cash to the Just For Fun envelope in the main office.

Everyone will need to sign a waiver prior to the event. Look for the waiver form attached to this issue of *Nixon News*. You can also obtain the form via the Internet at www.twistersgym.com. Click on parties, and then open the [bday.slip.pdf](#). Hope to see lots of happy kids at this event!

Denise Provost
Just For Fun Chair

Let Us Help You Get Organized by Clearing Out Your Closet of an Unneeded Item



We are looking for collapsible music stands in good condition. If you have one you would like to donate, we will use it for students during their music classes. Our goal is to provide students with stands so they do not have to bring one from home twice a week for their classes. We will gladly take your donations from now until Friday, December 16th. Once we see how many are donated, the PTA will purchase the remainder needed for use at school.

Soccer Uniforms

Wanted: used soccer uniforms! If you would like to donate your child's outgrown soccer uniforms, you can bring them to Nixon, where they will be sent to children in Palo Alto's Sister City, Oaxaca, Mexico. The Girl Scouts of Palo Alto, along with Neighbors Abroad, will box and transport the youth soccer uniforms. You can donate CLEAN shirts, shorts, and socks. Please, do not send shoes or shin guards. The donation box will be labeled "Soccer Uniforms for Oaxaca" and will be in the front entrance to Nixon School. Donations will be accepted until December 15th. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Nicholls.



Thank You, Nixon Community!

...for helping to make the Book Fair a big success! We sold over \$13,000 of books and other merchandise, netting about \$3,200 for Nixon PTA.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to everyone who shopped at the fair, to the teachers who brought their students to preview the fair, to Janice Mulholland for plugging the fair during library time, and to the classes who were displaced while the fair monopolized the theater.

In addition, here's an extra big thank you to the following volunteers who helped to set up the book fair, sell merchandise, and take the fair down:

Gioia Allegretti	Donna Kreup	Lisa Schmidt
Ann Backhouse	Amy Ladd	David Schneider
Gabriele Balas	Jang Hee Lee	Ivy Sanders Schneider
Anita Baldwin	Brenda Liu	Eve Scott
Jennifer Bostaph	Duncan MacMillan	Melissa Sheve
Chris Catlin	Nancy Marcotte	Cheena Shigematsu-Murphy
Will Catlin	Jo Marcus	Reva Shiv
Peggy Condon	Hulda Muaka	Tracy Stevens
Becky Conner	Jongae Mun	Leisa Waschura
Sharon Dally	Yoshimi Munch	Ellen Waxman
Jane Du	Sandra Nadim	Pam Wicks
Ian Fitzgerald	Susan Nicholls	Jeongweon Yang
Kyonghwa Hwang	Abi Okunuga	Karen Yang
Sumi Inagaki	Eundo Park	Grace Yu
Rie Koizumi	Suzie Russell	Daisy Zook

Sylvia Sanders and Ih-hae Chang
Book Fair Co-chairs

“Quakes and Shakes” Coming to Nixon

A Nixon PTA Sponsored Event

On Wednesday, January 4, Lawrence Hall of Science will present an assembly entitled “Quakes and Shakes”. Students will become junior seismologists as they predict earthquake damage and brainstorm retrofit strategies in shake-table experiments. Exciting interactive demonstrations of seismic engineering and discussions of plate tectonics will be adapted to the grade level of the audience. Earthquake preparedness will be emphasized throughout the program.

The assembly will be presented twice, at 10:30 a.m. for kindergarten through 2nd grade, and at 12:25 p.m. for 3rd through 5th grades. Parents are welcome to attend either presentation. This is the first in our annual series of school-wide assemblies funded by the PTA.

Save the Date: Tuesday, January 24th is Our Next Nixon Night Out

A Nixon PTA-Sponsored Event

Our next Nixon Night Out benefit is at **California Pizza Kitchen**, 531 Cowper Street in Palo Alto (on Cowper Street between University and Hamilton). California Pizza Kitchen offers a variety of foods and a great kids’ menu at very reasonable prices. So, don’t worry about what you are having for dinner – dine-in or carry-out. 20% of your tab will go to Nixon school.

Second Harvest Food Drive

By I S S (A-1 Student)

The food drive began on November 3rd and ended on the 18th. The days before, student council members had visited their buddy classes, alerting students and giving out envelopes for checks and bags for food. Twelve bins were placed strategically around the school, and at the end of the two weeks and a few days, all of the bins were full of lovely dried or canned non-perishable foods.

Thank you Nixon staff and students for helping contribute food to those in need!

Classroom Happenings

1st Grade Geo-Kids

"I liked the fossils." "My favorite part was finding the worms." Joe Young's and Kim Peckenpaugh's classes got hands-on experience with rocks, soil, minerals, and fossils on a field trip to the School of Earth Sciences at Stanford. A team of graduate students led four stations where the students got to handle the three different kinds of rocks, learned how geologists identify minerals by color, density/weight, hardness, shape and luster, had a scavenger hunt looking for bugs and other components that make up soils, and made their own fossils.

Joe Young's class also had the privilege of a visit from Nixon parent and soil expert Scott Fendorf. Scott explained the difference between soil (the rich stuff mixed with organic material that helps plants grow) and dirt (the stuff we track in on our shoes) and brought samples of sand, silt, and clay so the children could explore different soil textures. Students were excited to learn that the earth is like a big M&M: the chocolate is the big rock, and the shell that wraps around the rock is the soil!

4th Graders Tour California

Need to complete your California vacation plans? Stop by Palo Alto Village Travel in the Town and Country Shopping Center to see the window display of the exciting California brochures written by our 4th grade students. The students have been hard at work composing and designing brochures about our great state as they learn interesting facts, history, and geography. In particular, the students learn how to write nonfiction for a specific purpose and audience (potential travelers to California).

"My class loved this project, I am very proud of them!" beamed M W. "After diligent research of the four California regions—Mountains, Coast, Valleys, and Desert—the students turned their factual notes into interesting and inviting brochures." When asked his favorite part, R D said, "I liked working in teams, we were able to coach and help revise each others brochures." He also enjoyed drawing the California scenery.

R V also enjoyed the project. "I used a lot of action words to get people's attention, like "Start Packing –What are you waiting for!" said R. She envisioned sliding down sand dunes in the California desert. To find out all the other ex-

citing and fun things to do and know about California, just read any one of these excellent brochures.

Budding Entrepreneurs in 5th Grade (by T A, A-1 student)

It's another day opening up with Bizworld. Things are a little slow in the beginning, but the suggestion of making more bracelets for the Sales Bazaar gets everyone moving. After yesterday's financials are done, all of the groups breathe a sigh of relief, because they have one or two bizbucks left. Then Mrs. Manou (the teacher) writes on the whiteboard, "marketing package, ten bizbucks". All groups are astounded, before Mrs. Manou explains how much a 30-second commercial on TV might really cost. The only way they can get this money is by going back to the Venture Capitalist. The rest of the morning slips by very fast, groups working on marketing, buying raw materials (string), but always remembering to save about seven bizbucks for tomorrow's rent and salary. The class is very excited; tomorrow is the sales bazaar with the 4th graders who are the shoppers.

The big day has arrived. The anticipation grows. Everyone is ready, ready to sell all their bracelets. The morning starts out with the groups readying their advertisements. Before people know it, it is time for the sales bazaar. The commercials are done and the 4th graders have their bizbucks. There are shouts, yells, and bargaining. It was total chaos. Every company wants to sell completely out, and all but one do. After the sales bazaar, company representatives ran around comparing revenue with each other. Finally, on the following Tuesday, we found out who won. It was a company named Red Inc. This was because they had the best company value. We had learned a lot, but along with that, we had had a lot of fun, too.

Wrapping Up

A Nixon PTA-Sponsored Program

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Sally Foster Giftwrap fundraiser. Our profits this year exceeded \$4100.00! A special thank you goes to Brenda Liu, Katherine Lee, Pam Wicks, and Rob Nicholls for helping with packet and order distribution. Also, it is not too late to order giftwrap. You can go to Sally-Foster.com and place an order up to January 16th, and Nixon still earns 50% profit! Just use our school account number, 357650, when checking out.

Beyond Nixon

CYSA Soccer Tryouts

Union Football Club, a Palo Alto-based youth soccer club, is holding open tryouts for all teams this winter, starting at the end of November and continuing through February. Our teams play year-round in the competitive CYSA leagues. We are looking for committed players who seek to play at a higher level. UFC offers professional coaching and a great environment to learn in. Age groups: U8B/G, U9B/G, U11G, U12G (Class 1 & 3), U13G (needs players), U14B (new team), U15G. We also have an Academy for 4-7 year olds! For more info: please contact Carine Ireland, tryout coordinator, or go to www.unionfootballclub.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. 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 may be edited for spelling, grammar, clarity, and length. All submissions must include your name and contact information.

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