

REACH

A Creative Arts Magnet Program
Brook Haven Middle School, Sebastopol, California

Friday, December 5, 2008

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter from the REACH Parent Foundation

Our Schools Need your Help!

Stacey Schuett, President, Sebastopol Educational Foundation

Sebastopol Educational Foundation is a non-profit fundraising organization working within and for the Sebastopol Union School District. The funds we raise go directly to the schools; at Brook Haven, SEF supports a wide variety of programs—art, music, sports, drama, the library, technology and classroom enrichment—that benefit all of our students. We raise funds a number of ways: through an annual Auction, the Art Jam, sales of the Folk Art For Schools Calendar, and the Pledge Program. In the past, we've set a dollar amount goal, but this year, with state funding being largely uncertain (though certain to be seriously cut), we're trying a different approach: **the aim is for 100% family participation.** Last year, 161 families out of 650 in this district contributed to SEF's Pledge Program... so far this year, 138 families have contributed. **Our schools need MORE help this year!** We're encouraging every family to give whatever amount is comfortable to help our schools and our students. I know that we as REACH parents already contribute to the RPF, but please help us reach our goal of 100% participation by also contributing to SEF. The programs SEF supports benefit our Magnet kids also, and make for a high quality educational experience for everyone. **Thank you for being part of the solution.**

Donate on line at: www.sebastoplschools.org/sef, or contact the school office for information.

Lunch Volunteers Needed!

If you are a Yard Duty volunteer, we need you to restate your commitment to this service. We also need some additional help on Fridays and on rainy Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please email your re-commitment times and days (and contact info) to Karen Mirabelli (REACH.Director@gmail.com) so she can redo the schedule. She needs this info by Thursday, Dec. 11.



www.reach-program.com

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 6
Winter Social 7-10pm
REACH Parents

Saturday, Dec. 6
Kids Activity Night
6:45 - 10:15pm, Brook Haven Gym

Wednesday, Dec. 10
REACH Parent Foundation,
Library 6:30pm
Interested Parents

Friday, Dec. 12
Winter Music Festival
Evening

**Monday, Dec. 22 -
Monday, Jan. 4**
No School - Winter Break

Cubby Project!

Students have expressed interest in having cubbies outside the classroom, but the \$10 donations are only barely trickling in. If your child wants a cubby, please put your donations in the RPF box in the Office, either in cash or by check made out to RPF, with a note indicating its purpose.

Pledge Reminder!

It's time to get your monthly pledge in! Please drop in the REACH box in the Brook Haven office or mail to: RPF, 708 Gravenstein Hwy N. #203, Sebastopol, CA 95472

You Too Can Avoid Illness This Winter!

By Sherry Fader

Wouldn't it be great if we could avoid getting sick during the cold season! Well, there are a few things we can do to help build a strong immune system and reduce our chances of getting sick.



A healthy immune system begins in the gut. First we must get our bowels moving to be sure we are not taxing our liver and kidneys with unnecessary toxins. Eating a diet high in fiber is a great way to do this. Also, be sure to include some of those friendly bacteria found in fermented foods and yogurt—they account for as much as 40% of our immune function. ******Give your liver a boost by adding a cup of tea made with hot water, 2tlbs of lemon juice and a little honey for sweetness.***

Every cell in our body is manufactured from the foods we eat so eating food that nourishes our bodies is essential to a strong immune system. Minimize fast foods, packaged foods and eat more whole foods and fruits and veggies that provide us with powerful antioxidants. Cooking with garlic and onions is a great immune booster—both contain antiviral and antibacterial compounds. Increase your vitamin C levels with some citrus or take a supplement to be sure you are getting a minimum of 500mg and preferably 1000mg per day.

Let's not forget the importance of regular exercise to keep our lymphatic system from stagnating. Our bodies depend on our lymphatic system to filter our blood. Exercise keeps them in tip top shape.

Lastly, reducing our daily stress level is difficult especially during the holiday season. But keep in mind that chronic stress actually affects us on a molecular level. If you have the time for yoga or meditation that's great but even taking a couple of minutes to breathe deeply can reduce stress. Try it when you're standing in line or waiting to pick up the kids from school. Get plenty of rest and remember some experts claim that laughter is the best remedy in stress reduction.

Have a happy and healthy holiday season.

PS ***Washing your hands often remains the #1 way to prevent germ transmission.

Life Skills Class for 6th Grade

A Key to Success in School and Life

By Kathleen van der Horst

As REACH parents, our commitment to education means we believe every child in our school deserves the opportunity to learn to his or her fullest capacity.

To succeed in school, students need to be engaged, interested, and excited to be there. They need to know how to focus their attention on their work, keep trying even when they get discouraged or face setbacks, work effectively with other students and adults, and be good communicators and problem-solvers. These skills form a foundation for young people's success not just in school, but also in their adult lives as members of the community, as productive workers, and later, as parents.

Life Skills, which I teach to the 6th graders, is a program that teaches these skills, sometimes referred to as "Social and Emotional Learning" (SEL).

Many studies clearly show that students who receive SEL academically outperform their peers who do not receive SEL. They also get better grades and graduate at higher rates. Effective SEL drives academic learning, and it also drives social outcomes such as positive peer relationships, caring and empathy, and social engagement. SEL instruction also leads to reductions in problem behavior such as drug use, violence, and delinquency.

The research is clear: attending to the social and emotional learning of children is an investment in their success in school and their future success as adults.

What is Life Skills?

The Life Skills class teaches a process for developing the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. I cover the skills that we all need to handle our relationships, our work, and ourselves effectively and ethically.

These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically.

They are the skills that allow our children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

I am very privileged to teach this class weekly and the children seem very interested and engaged, which is a win-win for all.

As we're now well into our school year and settled into our routines, it might be a good time to remember some of the helpful information available in your Parent Handbook. The following is a reprint of the communication section for those of you who might have issues or comments about your child's educational program that you would like to bring forth.

Collaboration & Communication

Collaboration amongst teachers, administrators, students and parents is highly valued at REACH. Parental involvement in supporting a student's learning is integral to the success of our program, and we believe regular communication is essential. To achieve this, a variety of communication avenues and support systems have been established.

- If you have a question about the program, (enrichment, scheduling or curriculum design) please contact the Program Director.
- If you have a question, problem, or a concern about an academic matter regarding your student, please go to the classroom teacher first.
- If you have concerns regarding your student's interactions with other students or teachers, encourage your student to go talk to the School Counselor.
- If you have concerns regarding the Parent Foundation's goals for curriculum, enrichment and/or social/emotional matters, please approach the Board President or RPF Parent Liaison.

Talking with school personnel

- The teachers, administrators, and/or school counselor are happy to make time to speak with parents about questions or concerns. E-mail is usually the quickest and most effective way to have your questions answered. Phone calls are not transferred to classroom teachers during their teaching schedules, although they can sometimes be reached during breaks.
- The Program Director is on campus for a limited schedule this year but she is quick to respond to emails. Regular on-campus office hours will be published in the newsletter. Can we publish these?
- Teachers are best reached by email and are often available at the end of the day for questions: however it is always best to schedule ahead of time by e-mail or note to arrange for contact with a teacher.
- Please do not plan to have conversations with the teacher before the day begins, since they are busy preparing for the day. However, you may send a note.

The Green Zone

As the holiday season is suddenly upon us (again?!), we might want to consider ways to be both socially and ecologically conscious this giving season. Here are some suggestions along those lines.

Alternative Gift Ideas – rather than (or in addition to) giving 'things', consider donating your time and energy by volunteering at a local organization, or donate money towards organizations that give impoverished people a lift up.

The Giving Tree - for gifting to local families in need (sponsored by the Tri-School PTSA). Select and check out an ornament in the Brook Haven school office, shop for a gift, and bring the gift back to the office. For details call Angela Nielsen at 206-0725.

Heifer International is a non-profit organization whose goal is to help end world hunger and poverty through self-reliance & sustainability. Donations provide training and useful farm animals or things like bees, trees, and baskets for rural populations

Local Volunteer Service Opportunities -

- **Sebastopol Interchurch Pantry** provides opportunities for students to help homeless and poor people. Contact person is Lil Ogden at 823-2285
- **Redwood Empire Food Bank** desperately needs volunteers to help with food collection and distribution. They have a great network in the Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, and Rohnert Park areas. For information and registration see <http://www.refb.org/>

Responsible Disposal - The current issue of 'The Next STEP' newsletter, published by the Sebastopol Toxics Education Program, features an article called 'Healthier Holidays – On a Budget', with ideas on decorating with nature, responsible disposal of holiday trash, and using natural scents. See <http://www.healthyworld.org/aHolidays.html>

Also included is a piece on 'Preventing Plastics Pollution'—its hazards to bird and fish life (did you know about the 3.5 million ton 'island' the size of Texas in the Pacific Ocean that traps and kills sea birds and marine mammals in the hundreds of thousands every year?), and how to recycle or avoid using those materials in the first place! <http://www.healthyworld.org/aPlastics.html>.

- by Diana Badger, 6th grade parent

Last week's Thanksgiving Feast was a great success! Lots of parents and students enjoyed a sumptuous meal together, with presentations by all of the grades. Thanks for the delicious dishes and the many helper bees; we couldn't have done it without you!



Photos courtesy of Rachelle Steele