



The Year in Review

by Outgoing Director Karen Mirabelli

Well, I can hardly believe that there is less than a week left of school— Okay, that it's the day before school gets out, but it is here, the end of the year and summer fun, (if not sun) and what a year it has been. I mean that in a mostly good way.

I'll start with the negative, which were really just the injuries and illness that plagued our beloved Mrs. Peters's family. And, happily, I will leave it at that, because Maggie and Chris and Maggie's mother are now well and Casey has, indeed, experienced and speedy and remarkable recovery. For those of you who don't know, he is functioning as he was before the accident: crawling, 11 month-old-jabbering, and taking steps right where he

continued page 6

Mark Your Calendar

Mon., June 14

RPF Board Mtg, 6:30pm BH Library

Sun., Aug. 22

Orientation & Family BBQ - Ragle Park

Tues., Aug. 24

First day of school

Tues. & Wed., Aug. 24 & 25

Early release - 1:30pm

Wed & Thurs., Sept. 1-2

All school overnight Unity Retreat

Fri. - Mon., Sept. 3-6

No School - Labor Day Holiday

Wed, Sept. 8

Clubs begin

Wed. - Fri., Nov. 24-26

No School - Thanksgiving Holiday

Mon., Dec. 20 - Sun. Jan. 2

No School - Winter Break

Fri. - Mon., Feb. 18-21

No School - Presidents' Day

Mon.-Fri., March 21-25

No School - Spring Break

Fri., Apr. 22 - Mon., Apr. 25

No School - April Break

Fri., June 3, 2011

Last day of school

Congratulations 8th Graders!



RPF Update

By Paul Schwebel

May meeting: We received a letter signed by five 7th grade parents with suggestions regarding curriculum issues in the higher grades. Three of the parents were at the meeting to share their thoughts and a brief discussion followed about Math/Science and Language Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences. The board was appreciative of the feedback and acknowledged that many of their points had also been identified in the parent survey and was very useful in planning for the coming year.

Marianna and Rachelle presented the process they've created for planning and running field trips. We've had some killer field trips this year and the field trip committee has done a great job not only with the trips themselves, but with developing a standard process for planning and execution that can be handed on to future parent committees. Talked about the success of field trips, Ashland and Fort Ross. They suggested having a field trip representative in each homeroom, representing each grade or combo. Will meet with Justin regarding next year's field trip schedule.

Director's report (new director!): Enrollment up with more coming in. Discussion of best use of resources with our increased enrollment.

Update on the parent survey. Excellent response from 47 of 49 families. Overall very positive. Comments on continued refinements in core curriculum (above). Our community is forming. Upcoming: student survey and an informal check-in with the teachers for their perspective, though not a formal survey.

Further updates on Fall Unity retreat, Westminster ropes for 8th grade, 7th/8th sex education class, REACH signage, options for computer and technology updates.

The board is meeting twice in June. There was a short meeting June 7th to discuss the REACH School budget in the face of the devastating cuts to public education. REACH is happily on a solid financial footing right now with the additional funding through our Charter Implementation Grant and able to weather the cuts and delays in state funding. We began discussing long-term financial stability and will be keeping a close eye on things to assure sustainability of our school.

Be A Part of Much Ado About Sebastopol!

People and Contacts Needed!

Know anyone with a rental business - we need to rent large 40'x40' tent (in exchange for advertising?)

Be a Brook Haven/REACH Booth Leader - oversee a school booth - free entrance to Faire, free drink and food, enables your child to work

6th grade - "Twilzewop" - pillow fighting on a low balance beam

7th grade - "Rat-a-pult" - fling rats (fake ones!) with a small catapult

7th grade - make chaplets (head wreaths)

8th grade - "Dunk tank"

REACH Program - Apothecary Guild - make sachets, herbal soap, and more

Be a Brook Haven/REACH Booth Volunteer (students and/or adults) work a 2-4 hour shift in one of the booths listed above - free entrance to Faire, free drink (and food if 4 hours), enables your child to work

Pass out posters & postcards to local businesses

Help decorate - help needed preparing decorations for Faire and displays for Silent Auction

Contact businesses - help us get donations from businesses for craft supplies, food, auction, sponsorships, etc.

Have a special skill? Tarot Card reading, Calligraphy, Sewing, Artist, other? We could use your help!

If you can help in any way or have questions, please email MuchAdo@sebastopolschools.org.

To stay tuned with what's happening with Much Ado, visit MuchAdoAboutSebastopol.org over the summer.

Help us keep our schools strong by supporting this educational fundraiser! Proceeds go directly to Park Side, Pine Crest, Brook Haven and REACH schools.



Eighth Grade Art Swan Song

What do Vincent Van Gogh, Salvador Dali, David Hockney and Andrew Wyeth have in common? These are some of the artists chosen for study by the eighth grade art class. Students selected one particular work by their artist to copy and recreate as a three-dimensional painting. Backgrounds, middle grounds and foregrounds were painted and placed separately into a shallow box constructed by the students. Additionally, the students researched salient facts about their artists and reported back to the class. Results have been nothing less than spectacular, even though these remain works in progress. Congratulations to the eighth graders who have finished the year with some pretty impressive works in their art portfolios! What a joy it has been to work with them. - Judy Timmerman

*Incredible underwater art work from the 4/5 class
and Judy Timmerman....*



should be. Absolutely remarkable. He continues to have to be watched very closely and the greatest risk to him is re-injury to the brain and infection. There is a significant danger of infection and his brain is quite susceptible so they are keeping a close eye on that. Still, his path of recovery has been miraculous and amazing, so I am very grateful and relieved. That was truly the downside to a year that has been full of other beautiful gifts. Even that traumatic event gave us support from parents and teachers including Denice Hall, Judy Timmerman, and Magi Disco who all rearranged schedules and stepped in to provide extra hours and help stabilize the 4/5 class. We were also blessed to have had Nicola Pederson step in. She has been amazingly supportive to all of the students and parents in the 4/5 class, and in many ways, to the Peters family as she provided Maggie the freedom from worry about the class and allowed her to focus on Casey and her family. **THANK YOU MS. NIC!** And thank you to all of you seemingly tireless parents who have stepped in to help.

And now, I move on to the bittersweet, which is that my time at REACH as a parent ends tomorrow and my time as acting Operations Director for REACH winds down as well. Both of these changes have equally happy upsides as well.

The upside to my time winding down as a REACH parent is that I am extremely happy to have been a part of this generous community and we could not have chosen a better place for our daughter to spend her middle school years. And, believe me, we looked far and wide across Sonoma County for the best fit for her and turned down offers from some very good schools for her to attend REACH. REACH at Brook Haven was the place. Many of the friends that she and our family have made here over the past three years will be life-long friends and I consider her to have grown up in a really nice, interesting, and safe extended family. It wasn't without its trials and struggles, but she "got" the most valuable lesson of all from working through things with her classmates, which was how to be tolerant and to learn how to accept, work with, and respect individual differences, including her own. Having learned this, she and her classmates are poised to take on the high school world and are headed off to make their marks at Analy, ArtQuest, and Sonoma Academy, where they will join other REACH alumni in

making some very lasting waves of their own. I'm really proud of this entire group and I can honestly say that I'm 100% excited for what's next for them and not at all fearful. I will miss them and their quiet leadership and their inspiring capacity to have fun and allow for differences.

The upside to leaving my role as the Operations Director is that, again, I'm entirely excited for what is next and not at all fearful. I know that I'm transitioning away from a REACH with a solid foundation and though it's not perfect and still a work in progress (as any vital organization should be) we are very clear on what we are and about what we intend to offer. And I'm really happy to watch Justin take his expertise and his more than a decade of experience enacting teaching practices that are so kindred to REACH and watch him apply his experiences to directing the school.

He has spent more than a decade already practicing teaching that REACH is about. So, again, I am truly excited to see this school further solidify and then grow and evolve. Like our 8th grade graduates, the school is poised to take on the world; I love having participated in the refinement of what our school will offer and I am breaking out the pom-poms and am ready to be the school's loudest cheerleader as we encourage and hopefully participate in the school's continued health and longevity under Justin's leadership.

Many of you have asked if I will stay on at any capacity. The intention has always been that the director transition not be abrupt and that I would lend support for it to be a gradual process. I know, first hand, how much it is to take on directorship of REACH and with the added reality of the fact that although we are established, we are a new charter school in a district with a new Superintendent, the District and RPF have asked that I stay on call at least for the first half of the year. I remain committed to a smooth transition and plan to be participating in that throughout the greater part of next year.

And now, I'd like to close by relishing in some highlights of the year. So many things go on throughout your child's day at school and with parent volunteers at all hours, that you might not be aware of some of the accomplishments we've made this year.

- The Unity Retreat started the year off beautifully. We totally revamped the beginning-of-the-year

retreat to reflect REACH's commitment to social and emotional development as we took the first steps to creating "common ground" for our students. Several parent meetings on topics relating to students in the middle years were held, supporting information and skill-building for parents. Parent involvement greatly increased in 2009-10, and the parent community continues to strengthen year by year.

- The REACH Charter School heard in the fall of 2010 that it had received a large (\$250k) federal grant for planning and implementation, funds much appreciated in these times of school finance destabilization. Schools, including the REACH School, have had their basic per-student budgets cut by about 20% just in the last year. REACH has used the funds to support our small class sizes as we grow. Academically, REACH's approach has resulted in high test scores as well as students skilled in creative and critical problem-solving.
- The federal grant jump-started our funding such that a full time director could be hired, and we welcomed Justin Kornfein as the new director. Hiring was an inclusive and collaborative process that involved district and REACH parents, teachers, administrators and board members, exemplifying the high levels of cooperation between REACH and the district. REACH families continued to strongly support the Sebastopol Education Foundation this year and participate in site and district fundraising activities.
- The tradition of REACH field trips continued, with a week-long trip to Ashland by 7/8 graders for the Shakespeare Festival, and trips by the 4/5 to the Maritime Museum and Fort Ross. The older grades were able to go to the King Tut exhibit in San Francisco; the 7/8 students toured Chinatown on a docent-led trip. In addition, all students attended several local productions at Wells Fargo Center for the Arts.
- REACH continued its commitment to performing arts with drama instruction from staff from The Rep Theater, students grades 4-8 enthralled parents with lively Spanish conversation, courtesy of Ben Lev's innovative approach to instruction

and REACH's commitment to language instruction. REACH students' participation in Brook Haven's band continued to grow. Other weekly and daily enrichment activities and clubs, too numerous to mention, continued. We will note that the year culminated in the creation -- by students in the solar club--of a solar-powered fountain in the REACH quad--come see it! (Our new sign may be built soon, too.)

Overall, it was a big year, with so much accomplished by the students, their parents, the RPF Board, district and site personnel. I am grateful as I reflect on all who contributed to REACH accomplishments, and know that the school is well positioned for continued successes.



Big Thanks to Rachelle for the pictures - all year long!