

REACH

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

Monday, September 24, 2007

A Weekly Newsletter from the REACH Parent Foundation

Important Updates

- The 7 & 8th grade has needs 3 more drivers and two more passengers for Shakespeare on Friday, Sept. 28. Reply quickly to Nancy Higham or Stacy Low. If we don't get the parent drivers than some students won't be able to go. We leave at 9:00 and return between 3:00 and 3:30 depending on weather and traffic. Reply quickly to Nancy Higham or Stacy Low.
- The 4/5 class needs one more driver to Magi's pond in Graton on Friday, Sept. 28. Leaving at 10:00 and returning at 2:00.
- Any of you who have taken pictures at Creative Arts Magnet events please put them on a CD and give them to Nancy Higham to be used for yearbook and marketing. Please put your name on the CD so Nancy can get back to you with questions. Someone turned in a Westminster CD with no pictures on it and we need to return it for another pass to get the good pictures if possible.
- Clubs sign ups will come home tomorrow. Parents must sign the form in agreement with the student's choices. Please indicate if you can be a driver if your student has a first choice that is off-campus. Classes are divided equally among the grade levels when the subject matter is appropriate.
- We still need some tree sponsors to help with the cost of improving out quad area. Please contact Nancy Higham if you need more information.
- Updates for the Parent Handbook were given out at the parent meeting. If you did not attend you may get one from Nancy Higham. You may also obtain a handbook if you do not have one.—*Nancy Higham*

Parent Meeting Recap

Where can you get together with great friends, have an educational experience while supporting your child's educational experience, find out the latest nitty-gritty, and feel inspired as a part of a dynamic community? Why the REACH Parent Meetings, of course! The parent meetings are a vital link to the pulse of REACH and we strongly encourage all parents to attend. On Thursday, at the first REACH parent meeting at Brook Haven, we had an opportunity to convey our gratitude to our director, Nancy, for the "Herculean" job she has done to make this transition to Brook Haven a reality and to continue to lead our program with such dedication and skill. And the acknowledgement matched the honoree. Amy Smith presented a moving tribute to a courageously recep-



www.reach-program.com

Mark Your Calendar

Wed. Sept. 26

REACH Parent Foundation budget review meeting
6:30 Brook Haven library

Fri. September 28

7th & 8th grade to Marin Shakespeare at Dominican College- All day Henry IV part I

Fri. September 28

Parent Before School Coffee
Grade 4/5 sponsors
1st Friday of the month only

Fri. September 28

4/5 Pond Science with Magi Discoe 10:30 to 1:30
Graton

Fri. Oct. 5

1st session of club activities
1:30 to 3:05

Oct. 29 to Nov. 2

Parent Conferences
Dismissal every day at 2:00

Thurs. November 1

Student holiday, no school
Teacher inservice

tive Nancy with a beautiful plaque made by Tim Smith with sentiments expressed by REACH parents, and gift certificates to dinners at Langley's and River's End Restaurant, a two night stay in Jenner, and a gift certificate to Harmony Gardening. Thank you Amy and Ann Buller for making this happen.

Tony McGuigan and Carolyn Harbaugh Bellfy then shared their perspectives of Westminster Woods. There were some priceless observations such as the one made by Tony, especially after realizing that the 8th grade boys he was chaperoning, who were talking in the dark for two hours, (making his presence invisible), were the same boys his 7th grade daughter would be growing closer to as well! They also conveyed the breathtaking courage our students manifested in the ropes course challenges, and the community building that transpired both across the grades and within the grades.

Betsy Garlock and Stacy Schuett introduced SEF (Sebastopol Education Foundation) to our parents. SEF helps all students in the district, and the fundraising efforts make a huge difference in the quality of education our students receive. For parents not at the meeting, please check out the newsletter, the parent connection, at parentconnection.sebastopolschools.org for a fundraising calendar and more information about the great things they are doing.

Stacy Low will be contacting parents about field trip driving needs, so if you can be a driver or passenger for any field trip, please contact Stacy at slow@sbcglobal.net. We need drivers for the 4/5 field trip Friday September 28th at Magi's Farm.

The newest member of the RPF Executive Board, Onie Kriegl, illuminated the delicate balance for parent involvement between our enthusiastic involvement and feedback, and our judicious patience with the inevitable kinks of a fledgling program. She shared the Flow Chart designating who to go to when concerned about anything. The main instruction was always go first directly to the

person involved with the concern. Then follow the chart.

And finally, we broke into class groups to share heartwarming and heartbreaking stories of our experiences from middle school. We draw upon these as some of the motivation we bring to all of our efforts to support a program that can bring the best of what we ourselves received, as well as what we needed and never received at this critical juncture of our lives. For parents not at the meeting, please pick up parent handbook updates from Nancy's office.

—Laura Goldenberg

Kids and Backpacks

By Laurie Rubin

Backpack weight was raised as a concern at Back To School Night. I did a little internet research on backpack loads and wanted to share some helpful ideas with other parents. I started with the following web site where you can find links to the other sites I quote below: "Family, Youth and Community Sciences News".

fycs.ifas.ufl.edu/news/2006/08/backpack-safety.html

First, here's a little about the problem from the St. Louis Children's Hospital web site:

"According to the U.S. Consumer Products and Safety Commission, more than 7,000 children were injured last year due to overloaded backpacks, some weighing as much as 45 pounds. Experts estimate about half of all American school children carry too much weight in their backpacks, causing some kids to experience neck, shoulder and back pain.

"Although experts recommend backpacks should weigh no more than 10 percent of a child's weight, the average backpack weighs in at 20 percent of his or her weight.

"In fact, 10 to 19 percent of children miss school or sports activities every year because of pain caused by heavy backpacks. Furthermore, 30 to 50 percent of adolescents complain of pain related to backpack use." (from



“Backpack Safety -- Lighten the Load!,” Aug 2007, by Matthew Dobbs, MD, orthopedic surgeon on staff at St. Louis Children’s Hospital)

Here are some suggestions for choosing and using backpacks from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons web site:

Look for the following:

1. Wide, padded shoulder straps. Narrow straps can dig into shoulders. This can cause pain and restrict circulation.
2. Two shoulder straps. Backpacks with one shoulder strap that runs across the body cannot distribute weight evenly.
3. Padded back. A padded back protects against sharp edges on objects inside the pack and increases comfort.
4. Waist strap. A waist strap can distribute the weight of a heavy load more evenly.
5. Lightweight backpack. The backpack itself should not add much weight to the load.

6. Rolling backpack. This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load.

To prevent injury when using a backpack:

1. Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
2. Tighten the straps so that the pack is close to the body. The straps should hold the pack two inches above the waist.
3. Pack light. The backpack should never weigh more than 20 percent of the student’s total body weight.
4. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back.
5. Stop often at school lockers and remove items you don’t need, if possible. Do not carry all of the books needed for the day.
6. Bend using both knees, when you bend down. Do not bend over at the waist when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack.
7. Learn back-strengthening exercises to build up the muscles used to carry a backpack.” (from “Backpack Safety,” 2004)

Given that our 6th-8th grade students have no desks or lockers at Brook Haven for storing books and notebooks, I wonder if it would be possible for us to build or buy cubbies or some sort of storage. Then the children wouldn’t have to carry every textbook, for which the school doesn’t supply home copies, every binder, and their water bottle everywhere they go.

Diversity at REACH

Diversity enriches all of us. Diversity includes ethnicity, race religion, gender identification, sexual identity, body type and size, language, adoptive families and children of gay and lesbian parents. REACH aims to take a pro-ac-

tive stance to make sure every student feels accepted and respected. This takes awareness and conscious thought. With that intention, RPF is forming a Diversity Committee that will support an environment at REACH that is sensitive to diversity in all of its manifestations, as well as support the diverse members of the student body. Out of this increased awareness, we can begin to plan for outreach to increase the level of diversity at REACH. If you are interested in participating, please contact Laura Goldenberg at goldenbyrd@comcast.net or Joe Graff at bcorinblit@aol.com. We will plan to meet in the near future on a Wednesday or Thursday evening.

—*Laura Goldenberg*

RPF Board Meeting Minutes

With the intention of keeping parents and other interested school community members in the loop, I will be sending summaries of the RPF Board Meetings. Here is the first one:

I had approached Joe Graff and John Reid about forming a committee to support diversity at REACH. Joe wrote a letter that was addressed at the RPF meeting with many ideas to enrich diversity. RPF decided that a committee to foster diversity would be a great way to further this. Please see the newsletter article for more information about this committee. Anyone is welcome to participate.

Updates from the Director-Nancy Higham:

1. Database: Corrections for parent handbook are being prepared to give to parents at the parent meeting. Nancy is also working on the calendar.
2. Ann Buller is tracking all documents sent by parents and is following up with phone calls.
3. Ann Buller, Ann Akers and Laura Goldenberg are spending time with Nancy to help catch up on details.
4. Enrichment is now in place and contracts are completed. Friday Club contracts are next.
5. The library is now staffed by REACH parent volunteers every morning before school, at lunch time, and two days a week after school. The librarian is very appreciative! Steph has daily math tutor volunteers and Claudia needs lab volunteers two days a week.
6. Nancy is editing all newsletter articles on Friday and sending to Amy for REACH newsletter sent out Sunday or Monday.
7. There are some glitches with website. Apparently there is the old and new website. Nancy has asked Richard to check it out.
8. Classroom needs: furniture, major supplies and textbooks. Kym helped to arrange for classroom tables to be purchased from Salmon Creek School.
9. Landscaping: The beautiful ornamental pear trees have been planted, and we’ve asked for sponsors to help

underwrite the costs.

10. Nancy's office now has some bookcases, thanks to Natasha and Karen.
11. Meeting time with teachers is still getting worked out. They have once a month scheduled and are looking to find a second time monthly to meet with Nancy.
12. Teachers' computers (new Apple computers with flat panels) have now arrived. We are now waiting for district tech person to be hired, to hook them up.
13. Spanish has begun for 4/5 with Marcella Ronin. She is a native speaker from Colombia. Dama Caro has just been hired to teach Spanish for 6,7 and 8. She is from Peru. Nancy is working on scheduling for Dama Caro's classes.
14. Nancy is preparing a Program Director's Report for the School Board. As you can see, Nancy has been exceedingly busy. We are all so appreciative. The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on September 12. This year's officers were elected! Cheryl Constanti is President, Julie Kawahara is Vice President, Onie Kriegler is Secretary, Judi Scherrer is Treasurer, and Janny Tansil is Past President.

- Janny Tansil provided a new Board Member Orientation to our three new Board Members: Ann Buller, Onie Kriegler and Liz Bjornstad. Welcome new Board Members!!
- Judi Scherrer gave a financial report. She needs updated information on parent donations before she has a working budget, but she may have it by the Parent Meeting. "Last month" donations are the figures she uses when developing the budget, and these were still coming in. In the last few weeks before school started, 20 new families enrolled! We have always had an independent annual review of the yearly budget, but starting this year, a CPA will review our end of year financial report.
- We still need a SCRIP coordinator! And a Volunteer Coordinator!
- Auditions for Chorus have now taken place!
- We discussed Westminster Woods. By the time this comes out, we hope all students had a great experience.
- John Shillington is meeting with the 7th and 8th grades to discuss Henry IV Part I, in anticipation of the field trip to the play in Marin on September 28.
- Julie Kawahara is assisting Nancy Higham in working with the district to hammer out the necessary documents regarding REACH for historical for planning for the winter social. It sounds like it will be a very special event! More details will be unfolding in the coming months.
- Agenda for September 20 Parent Meeting was discussed.
- Betsy Garlock will introduce SEF to parents at that time.
—Laura Goldenberg

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Fine Arts Class

There are still a few openings in Pat Menicucci's afternoon art classes. Pat is a well loved local artist who has taught art to kids for many years. Classes are held at her country home studio, surrounded by beautiful gardens.



The kids learn a variety of drawing and painting techniques using different mediums- charcoal, pencil, pen & ink, pastels, collage, and acrylic paint. Classes are 2 hours long and run from September through May. \$90/month plus supplies fees. Ages 10-18. This class is a gem. Call Pat Menicucci at 823-8760.

American Philharmonic Season Opener!



Go to www.apsonoma.org for details of "Pasion!" - a concert of music by Latin American composers, and featuring the renowned Mariachi Champana Nevin Orchestra from San Diego.

Saturday, October 6, 3pm, Juilliard Park, Santa Rosa

Sunday, October 7, 3pm, Wells Fargo Center, Santa Rosa. For more information, contact Lisa Doyle 823-5034.

CLASSIFIEDS

House+Dog Sitter Wanted

Help! We are looking for a home for our dog Daisy while we are in Australia from the middle of December to the middle of January. If you have a great dog/house sitter that you would recommend, or if you would be interested in a "dog care exchange" arrangement, call Lisa, 823- 5034, or marchant63@hotmail.com.

For Sale

Yakima Q Towers with locks. \$90 or B.O. Fits cars without rain gutters. All you need are the bars. It fit our 95 Honda Odyssey. Go to www.yakima.com to see if these would fit your car. E-mail Amy at amy@djunadesign.com.

Want to Advertise?

REACH classifieds for for-sale items, events, and interest matches are free for individuals in the REACH community. We also have business classifieds. If you'd like to advertise your business in the REACH News, it's \$10 a month or \$50 a year for a classified ad or \$100 a year for a 2" x 2" ad. Kid businesses advertise free.