

The Paradise Valley Paw Print

November/December 2013

Hello Paradise Valley Community!

It's November and our first grading period is coming to a close. Wow, time sure fleets when we are having fun learning so much at school! I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the GREAT experiences we had at our school this past month. Thank you to the wonderful parent volunteers who helped organize Unity Day on October 9th and our biggest fundraiser, Panther Prowl, on October 18th.

October was National Bullying Prevention Month and October 9th was celebrated as Unity Day. We wore orange or school colors and pledged to unite against bullying. All students tied orange ribbons on the fence to show their "Unity". As a school, we stand against bullying and work to provide all students with a safe and meaningful learning environment. More information on this is available at: <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm/unity-day.asp>.

Another fun highlight was the Panther Prowl. What a great event again organized by dedicated parent volunteers! Staff and students had so much fun running laps together. There are some pictures adorning the school front office hallway, if you would like to get a glimpse of the fun we all had. A very heartfelt "Thank You" to all who pledged money to support our school. We are very appreciative of all your contributions! Our goal was \$28,000 and we made it to a little over \$32,000. Great job everyone! We promised the students that the staff will be doing a 'Macarena' performance for them if we made our pledge money goal. Looks like we are going to do that soon! Please keep an eye out.

With November comes Parent-Teacher Conferences and I would like to reiterate to you the importance of this time. This is the perfect time to discuss and ask any questions about your child's performance in class and keep yourself updated about your child's progress. Students in Grade 2nd – 6th just took the second benchmark assessment and the teachers have your child's scores. This is an opportune time to look over those scores and see what your child is doing well in and what concepts need more review. This is good, specific feedback for appreciating your children for their successes and redirecting them toward focus concepts. We have a No-Student Day on Friday, November 8th, 2013, and No School (Veteran's Day) on Monday, November 11th, 2013. Just a friendly reminder that we have minimum days starting Tuesday, November 12th – 15th, 2013, for teachers to facilitate conferences. Dismissal will be at 12:50 pm.

If you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance, please feel free contact me at 408-201-6460 or email me at: dagars@mhusd.org. We are together in this wonderful educational journey for your child!



Sincerely, Swati Dagar, Principal

Produced by the PV Home & School Association, Inc. (HSA)
paradisevalleyhsa.org/Home & www.paradise.mhu.k12.ca.us/

What is Coming Up Soon?

November

- 5 Election Day
- 7 End of First Trimester
- 8 Friday, NO SCHOOL, In-Service Day
- 11 Monday, NO SCHOOL, Veterans Day
- 12-15 MINIMUM DAYS
- 13 Home & School Assoc. Mtg 7:45 a.m.
- 20 ELAC, 6-7 p.m., Library
- 20 Paradise Parents Book Club 6:30 p.m.
Club meets at BookSmart
- 22 Panther Den
- 22 Honor Roll Assemblies, 4th-6th, 8:15 a.m.
- 28 Thanksgiving Day
- 25-29 NO SCHOOL

December

- 4 **Last day to order year books**
To Order: paradisevalleyhsa.org
Questions: gina@girouardfamily.com
- 6 Cookies with Santa, Cafeteria, 2:15
- 11 Home & School Assoc. Mtg 2:15 p.m.
- 13 School Site Council Mtg, 2:15, Library
- 13 Panther Den
- 18 Paradise Parents Book Club 6:30 p.m.
Club meets at BookSmart
- NO SCHOOL – December 23 – January 3
- RETURN TO SCHOOL – Monday, January 6

Don't forget: Chess Club meets every Wed, cafeteria, after school. Join if you can!



This holiday season Paradise will again participate in the South County Toys for Tots Program. We are asking for donations of new, unwrapped toys and canned food. Please deposit items in the school entry area during December and they will be distributed as part of the Toys for Tots program to Paradise Valley families in need.

Cookies with Santa

Meet Santa and his elves on Friday, December 6, starting at 2:15 p.m. in the cafeteria. **Admission is \$5 per child** and includes cookies, drinks, and a fun holiday craft. Don't forget to **pre-order your tickets**, as the space is limited and sells out quickly! Check your student's Friday folders for order forms. Also Spirit Wear, holiday crafts and gift items from local vendors will be on sale. Just in time for holiday gift giving!



The Third Annual Panther Prowl was a HUGE Success!



The Panther Prowl fundraising total is already over **\$32,000** and still counting! The lucky winners of the prized iPads are Ashlee Atkins in 4th grade and Mathew Fitch in 2nd grade. Their combined pledge total was over \$1,700. Congratulations to them! Mrs. Bonino's 3rd grade class won the California Sports Center Gymnastics Party & Fieldtrip, while Mrs. Bonino also won a \$50 Teacher Gift Card.

We are especially grateful to local businesses that supported the Panther Prowl. There are many schools in town that could earn their sponsorship dollars, but they chose to support us! Let's return the patronage to:

California Sports Center Gymnastics, Radwan Pediatric Dentistry, Wafelbakker-Anderson Orthodontics, FES, Inc., Jim Atkins Transportation, Nicole Burke with Thirty-One, Chaparral Signs & Auto Graphics, DirectFix.com & iPhone Repair, Karlene DiNapoli with Intero Real Estate Services, Nob Hill Foods, Lusamerica Foods, Inc.

Unity Day also brought out the best in everyone, especially our GRAND PRIZE recipient: Danielle Chaisson, room 12, and each grade's coloring and poster winners!

Programs at Paradise Valley

November/December 2013

Project Cornerstone



Project Cornerstone is a large-scale initiative of the YMCA of Silicon Valley, which works not only with Paradise Valley Elementary, but also approximately 200 other schools and community partners. Paradise Valley's Project Cornerstone team has a long list of activities for parents and students coming up. For questions about the program or to volunteer, contact Diana Gill, dlding@yahoo.com. Here goes:

The books that will be read in your children's classrooms are: *One* in November and *If the World Were Blind* in December.

Last month your student heard a book titled *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*. The goals of this lesson are to identify caring adults in their lives, develop their personal power and believe that they have control over their lives, and increase self-esteem. Here are some activities that you can do at home to help achieve these goals:

- Boost Each Other Up: Celebrate each family member's special talents and abilities. Go around the dinner table and have each family member say one thing they like about each of the other members.
- Wall of Fame: Create a special place in your house to display items that family members are proud of. Assign a space for each family member. Make sure there is space for parents, too!
- Encourage adults at home to have frequent conversations about the caring adults in the lives of youth. Identify who they are at school, in the neighborhood, and in the family.

Paradise Valley will be hosting a one-hour parent seminar presented by a representative from the YMCA Project Cornerstone titled "No More 'Kids Will Be Kids.'" The program raises awareness about the issues of bullying and peer abuse in schools, shares strategies that help children avoid becoming victims of bullying, empowers them to STAND UP and make a difference when they see someone else being bullied. The topic of digital bullying online and through text messages on mobile phones is also addressed. It is FREE and will be held on Monday, November 18, from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the Paradise Valley cafeteria.

One more item specific to Project Cornerstone and Paradise Valley ... on Monday, Nov. 4, Project Cornerstone and Funvisor are hosting a special activity: "Holiday Mail for Heroes," which is creating holiday cards that will be mailed to service members currently overseas. It dovetails nicely into Veterans Day on November 11 and Project Cornerstone Asset #9, "Service to Others." To volunteer for this particular activity (no Funvisor experience needed) contact jborgioli@verizon.net.

Lastly, the YMCA Project Cornerstone team is offering a six-week workshop in January at Paradise Valley in the evenings from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. called "Take It Personally (TIP)." It exposes parents to ways to support and encourage their children to do well academically and socially. If you are interested in taking this workshop soon and/or would prefer to do so during the day, it is also scheduled at PA Walsh Elementary from 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. on Nov 5, 12, 19, Dec 3, and 10.

ONE MORE THINGSupport your school through **Box Tops and Labels for Education!** Put completed labels (no sheets needed!) in a zip lock with your child's name, grade and teacher; return to your teacher or the designated folder in the HSA box located in the school office lobby.

People at Paradise Valley

November/December 2013

Independent Thinking? Fun on the Playground? It's All in a Fourth Grade Days Work.

What grade is your favorite? Do you remember one that stood out as a time when you learned something that is still with you today, or had a close friend with whom you figured out some of life's big questions, or maybe just had great "kid" fun with little or no problems that plague later tween and teen years?

Fourth grade surfaces for many as one school year that not only includes a lot of independent learning and getting a glimpse at important concepts that take students through the rest of their academic lives, but also a time when they can still be kids, still make up games on the playground, and still giggle at goofy things.

At this age students are transitioning into the upper grades, perhaps a bit nervous, but still usually excited about the nitty-gritty details that tougher projects and subjects offer. No one knows better about the fun and challenging balance that exists than Paradise Valley's fourth grade staff: Mrs. Wagner, room 24, Ms. Lewis, room 8, and Mrs. Miller, room 7. Each has a number of teaching years to her credit and brings that hard-earned wisdom to life in their classrooms' vibe and students' experiences.

Ms. Lewis points out that, "It is amazing how detailed and unique each student is. I learn something new from them all the time. They're surprised by this, but I'm not!"

While the fourth grade staff has taught other grades in their past professional experiences, each sees fourth as the one right for her because of things like the curriculum or the chance to reach kids at an age when it is possible to have a positive, long-lasting impact by giving them the tools and training they need to be successful in future years.



But let's not lose sight of the potential for goofiness that makes kids laugh, either. Early on in Mrs. Wagner's career she hosted a "pooch in the park" day with students, their parents and family pets. Unbeknownst to her a third grade teacher also planned a park day with students and a group of miniature goats. At least one dog got loose, charged after the goats, and started a free-for-all with kids, dogs, parents (hopefully good-humored ones), and goats. So school can be like a chaotic zoo, and Mrs. Wagner knows that all too well!

Now back to the serious stuff. While reading, writing and math are still a critical part of instructional time, teachers can more readily expand on science and social studies concepts because kids are able to take on detailed or critical thinking requirements of such work. The kids in fourth grade are developing into citizens with a great deal to offer. The staff now in place is the right team to help them discover and reach their own growing potential!

Next month's *Paw Print* will feature the kindergarten staff!

For questions about the Home and School Association, programs it supports, or to volunteer please contact pvhsa@yahoo.com.