

The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK) is a community-based, all-volunteer organization whose mission is to promote educational opportunities and academic success for students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park.

Spring 2009

Ravenswood District to Cut \$1.8M from the Budget Teachers Need our Help!

Not surprisingly, the economic downturn has led to cuts in school budgets and a decrease in donations. Fortunately, EPAK has little overhead, and we were still able to make over 360 grant awards totaling \$177,000 to teachers in the Fall 2008 and Winter 2009.

Regrettably, we were unable to award grants to 57 teachers who work with students in Special Education, English language development, school libraries, garden projects and other enrichment areas. More than 200 students are directly affected by these cuts.

Donate Now at www.epak.org.

Sponsored Projects Program - Spotlight



School Family Literacy – In 2008 *The Palo Alto University Rotary Club* provided funding for family literacy in the English language. The first in a series of Family Literacy nights took place at Belle Haven School on March 19th. Parents of K-3 graders learned the basics of supporting their child as they learn to read. Separate activities were provided for children while parents received instructions and demonstrations from teachers. The evening culminated with parents practicing the reading acquisition techniques with their children.

For Youth by Youth (FYBY) – This fall, EPAK approached the *Christensen Fund* to support the FYBY Program at Belle Haven. They launched a program to train staff and hold school-wide special events. FYBY develops and helps implement a structured behavior program to get teachers, staff and students working together to make schools free from violence and to create a climate that is conducive to learning.

Library Rejuvenation & Literacy Program

The Martin Luther King Day of Service on January 19, was very productive for a group of youths and adults at the Costaño School. Students and parents from Congregation BethAm and the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center joined Costaño students and EPAK board members and families to assemble 40 bookcases in a few short hours.

The bookcases will be filled with books donated by the community and delivered to each second grader at the school to take home and cherish as their own. Costaño Principal Gina Sudaria is expecting higher test scores resulting from the literacy program that includes reading tutors who come from surrounding communities to read with Costaño students organized by the Jewish Coalition for Literacy.



New Leadership... Same Incredible Impact

Laura Roberts, EPAK Board Member and a seven year volunteer, succeeds Tasha Castaneda as the new EPAK President.

Recent additions to the EPAK Board include Cindy Chin, who for six years was a classroom teacher at Willow Oaks School and is currently its administrative manager, and Marco Chavez, Director of Categorical Programs and Multi-lingual/ELD Services for Ravenswood City School District. He grew up attending Ravenswood schools and was a teacher and principal at Green Oaks before becoming Director.



EPAK and Hoopoe Books Partner to Deliver 250 Books to Belle Haven

EPAK held a volunteer day at Belle Haven school in East Palo Alto to distribute brand new books to teachers for classroom libraries - just in time for the holidays!

Books, many in both English and Spanish, were donated by ISHK/Hoopoe Book's Share Literacy Program (<http://www.shareliteracy.org/>) through a grant from Kaiser Permanente. The group of students who volunteered are part of "The Earn Save Prosper Kids Club".

The effort was coordinated by EPAK Board Member and recently retired Ravenswood teacher, Martha Hanks. Over 250 new books were distributed to classroom teachers at Belle Haven, Willow Oaks, Edison Brentwood and McNair schools.

EPAK is a Great NonProfit – Tell the World!

Share your thoughts on our work at <http://www.greatnonprofits.org/reviews>

This helpful website is a great way for others to find out about us. So go online and tell them what you think.

EPAK Volunteer All Stars - Karen Shannon

EPAK has outstanding volunteers who lead, manage, organize, build, and encourage others. With gratitude to all, we would like to introduce you to a few special people in our newsletters.

Karen Shannon An EPAK volunteer since 2006, Karen began by providing her school library expertise when EPAK awarded a grant to the McNair Academy to rejuvenate their library. She spent the entire summer and much of the school year sorting through a distressed collection of boxed books,

then worked with teachers to build a collection that supported the curriculum. She helped implement a cataloguing system to check books in and out, trained teachers, and remained through the grand "reopening" of the library in March of 2007 until a library aide was hired.

Since then, she has taken on managing the EPAK donor database, provides analysis and reporting to the Fundraising Committee, and continues to work on school library projects, most recently at Costaño school.



Karen trains Deborah Denny in the art of fitting a book cover

Kindergarten Readiness Program for Ravenswood School District

The EPAK board recently accepted a generous donation for kindergarten readiness that will support a special program developed by the Ravenswood Child Development Center (RCDC).

The funds are provided by retired teacher Nancy Lund and will pay for kindergarten readiness kits, and stipends to conduct collabora-

tion between the Ravenswood School District kindergarten teachers and the preschool teachers at RCDC.

In addition a mini-camp for community students who were unable to attend preschool will be conducted over the summer thanks to these funds.

Volunteer Opportunities: EPAK needs volunteers with grant writing, fundraising, public relations and graphic design skills. Please contact Julie Mahowald at julie@mahowald.org to get involved.

EPAK Day is Friday, May 8, 2009 - Mark your Calendar!

Once a year we like to celebrate our progress, and the educators and students we impact at one of the Ravenswood schools. Come hear Principal Nicki Smith from the Stanford New School describe the innovative ways her teachers have used EPAK grants in the classrooms and how sponsored project funds expanded a music program so that all grades could benefit! This year EPAK Day is at East Palo Alto Academy, 2033 Pulgas Avenue in East Palo Alto on Friday, May 8th at 8:30am.



**East Palo Alto Kids Foundation
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