

Since 1993, the East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK) has been 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 2010

## Major Donors Support High Impact Grants



Thanks to our many loyal contributors and some important new donors, EPAK continues to provide critical funding to classroom teachers.

New high impact projects at one or more schools were funded, in whole or in part, by major donors in the areas of kindergarten readiness and parenting workshops (**Lund Family Foundation**), literacy intervention (**John and Marcia Goldman Founda-**

**tion**), positive behavior support (**The Christensen Fund**), leveled book rooms (**Juniper Networks Foundation Fund**) and music instruction (**Anonymous Family Foundation**).

Good news also came at the end of our fiscal year, with major donations coming from the **Heising-Simons Foundation** and the Holiday Funds of the **Palo Alto Weekly** and **Los Altos Town Crier** community newspapers. These donations allow us to budget optimistically for teacher micro-grants in the Fall. In light of continued education funding cutbacks, this is good news for struggling teachers and students!

## Micro-Grants Program Update

- 297 classroom micro-grants totaling \$144K were awarded to deserving teachers this school year. In addition to curriculum related materials and field trip requests, classroom technologies such as LCD projectors and interactive white boards were in high demand. Thanks to **Sue Allen** of Ravenswood City School District's technology department, EPAK was able to coordinate group orders for best pricing.
- Volunteers **Will Chen** and board member **Cindy Chin** put the EPAK application process online! Submitted applications are automatically sent to the teacher's principal for review,

and the EPAK Allocations team, led by board member **Tami Espinosa**, reads through and takes action on each grant request. This process saves a tremendous amount of time and we are happy to have taken our grant process into the 21st century.



## Sponsored Projects Highlights



**EPAK has a number of projects sponsored by donors that give \$5,000 or more for a targeted program**

• **Instrumental Music in EPA Schools:** Collaboration among an EPAK donor, For Youth by Youth (FYBY), Community School of Music and Art (CSMA), donated instruments from Menlo Park elementary school parents/students and a supportive principal made this budding

program possible. Over 150 students at five locations had instrumental music instruction this year with holiday and school pep rally performances. Cesar Chavez Middle School students have a designated music classroom and instruments to take home for practice. In addition, since the instrumental music is taught by FYBY, the gang prevention/positive behavior support model is reinforced during music instruction.

• **Leveled Book Rooms at Costano and Chavez:** EPAK found a donor to fund enhancements for the leveled book rooms at two schools this year. Cesar Chavez School, for example, purchased high interest books at a variety of levels for its middle schoolers to advance them to grade level and beyond through required independent reading and various intervention curriculum.

### 2010 Projects in Need of Funding:

- **Collective Roots Organic Garden Learning Program at Willow Oaks (\$9,000)** – Provides nutrition and science curriculum and hands-on instruction.
- **For Youth by Youth Belle Haven Year 3 (\$5,000- \$20,000)** - Teachers and students are trained to battle gang influences and reinforce positive behavior.
- **New Teacher Grants (\$5,000)** Classroom start-up grants at the beginning of the school year.

*EPAK needs your help to fund these projects and to make them a reality. To make a donation to EPAK in the amount of \$5,000 or more, please contact Julie Mahowald at 650-996-4754, or email [julie@epak.org](mailto:julie@epak.org)*

## New EPAK Board Members

EPAK has two new board members. We are happy to have **Alisha Fitzhugh** join us - especially since she attended the Ravenswood City School District as a student! Alisha is the Student Support Manager at Costaño School - home of the Forty Niner Academy. She works with students that require additional support around academics, social, and behavioral management. Alisha is passionate about the arts and was a music teacher at Edison Brentwood and McNair schools for over 9 years.

We also welcome **Lee Dinneen** to the board. Lee grew up in the South Bay and has been CFO for a variety of technology companies. Lee has volunteered for most of her life, enjoying the Junior League of Palo Alto, the Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and work in her children's Los Altos schools. She joins the Finance Committee and is organizing our annual event at EPACS on May 21st. Both are welcome additions and bring much-needed talents and experience to our board.

## EPAK Volunteer All Stars - Mary Noonan

**Mary Noonan** has made tremendous contributions to EPAK over the years as well as to the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD). Mary was a teacher for many years in the district, teaching reading, language arts and interpersonal skills. Mary served on the EPAK board for over 10 years in many capacities, including most recently as Grants Manager, where she initiated and nurtured donor relationships both large and small. Mary often worked alongside volunteers in the schools, organizing and running a wide variety of events. She hosted

many EPAK volunteer gatherings at her home in Redwood City where she spoiled us with homemade treats and wonderful cooking. She is a constant source of inspiration for all those that witness her passion and desire to help. EPAK and the greater RCSD is extremely grateful for Mary!



**Cocktails / Cuisine for a Cause - through May at the Four Seasons** EPAK is partnering with **The Four Seasons Hotel** in East Palo Alto during April and May. Enjoy an Italian-style Margarita, crispy calamari, BBQ short rib sliders, and many other cocktails and appetizers. A portion of the proceeds will directly benefit EPAK! Invite a friend or colleague to the Four Seasons!



**East Palo Alto Kids Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 50542**  
**Palo Alto, CA 94303**

## Join us for EPAK Day - Friday, May 21st at EPACS

Mark your calendar and join us for EPAK Day 2010, Friday, May 21st at 8:30 am at East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS), 1286 Runnymede Street in East Palo Alto. This is the perfect opportunity to reacquaint yourself with what we do and celebrate our progress. Meet with board members, volunteers and school principal, Laura Ramirez. Laura and her staff will talk about innovative ways teachers have used EPAK grants to strengthen education at her school and lead a classroom tour where you can observe teacher grant recipients in action. For more information visit [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org).

*To donate, please send check or money order to the above address, or donate online at [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org) Questions? [info@epak.org](mailto:info@epak.org) or (650) 852-9398 [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org)*