

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.

Fall 2009

EPAK Committed to Teachers and Students During Trying Times!



"The costs of a poorly educated community are borne by the community"

- Joe Simitian, State Senator

Another school year has begun, and with it has been a number of changes and challenges in the Ravenswood City School District – including budget cuts, teacher turnover, and facility moves. EPAK, however, remains steadfast in our commitment to help the students and teachers with grants and programs to promote educational opportunities and academic success. **Please donate! www.epak.org**

Micro-Grants Program Update

EPAK awarded 360 grants up to \$500 each during the 2008-2009 school year. The grants were again used in a variety of ways to improve education – the majority of the programs were for literacy, followed by science and math. Judging by the thank you notes received, we made a huge impact on the children! However, the number of grants and the total dollar value decreased for the first time in five years. As we enter a new school year, please consider making a donation. The teachers and kids will love you for it!



Sponsored Projects Update



EPAK has completed a number of projects recently. These projects are sponsored by donors that give \$5,000 or more for a targeted program.

• **Music Education at EPA Academy:** EPAK made comprehensive music curriculum possible with music and movement classes for K-2nd graders, instrumental music (band) for 4th-8th graders, and the Community School of Music and Arts conducted weekly classes for 3rd and 4th graders. The EPAA band

learned to read music for the first time, and performed five times during the year including leading a parade in San Francisco! This program will be funded for the 2009-2010 school year by the Schroeder Family Foundation.

• **For Youth By Youth (FYBY) Belle Haven Year 1:** Teachers and students were successfully trained to battle gang influences and violence through this positive behavior support program. Last year the truancy rate decreased 30 percent at Belle Haven, destructive language use decreased, and the school experienced an improved collaborative spirit among all stakeholders.

• **Kindergarten Transition Program at Ravenswood Child Development Center:** Wouldn't it be great if all students arrived prepared to meet the expectations for kindergarten? It's often difficult when a large percentage of kids don't attend pre-school - which may

lead to the beginning of an achievement gap that can grow in time.

Fortunately, the Kindergarten Transition Program has already served over 100 students and their families to help prepare them for kindergarten. In addition, on six Saturdays this past summer, 15 students attended a Pre-K academy to learn to work in a classroom environment. The program continues this fall with collaboration events for preschool and kindergarten teachers who will work together to ease the transition between the two schools.

• **New Teacher Grants:** a generous grant from the Christensen Fund provided startup funds to new teachers. Over 40 teachers across 13 schools received \$120 each to help make their classrooms more inviting and conducive to learning. EPAK provided these grants two of the last three years.

To donate, please send check or money order to the above address, or donate online at www.epak.org; Questions? info@epak.org or (650) 852-9398
www.epak.org

Projects in Need of Funding

Collective Roots Organic Garden Learning Program at Willow Oaks (\$9,000) – This program enables students to design and sustain organic gardens learning about nutritional education and about science through nature.

“Read Naturally” English Fluency Program at Brentwood Academy (\$7,000) – This program for students in the 2nd – 5th grade who are struggling with English language fluency, funds personnel and tools to provide one-on-one instruction and monitoring to improve reading fluency which is directly correlated to reading comprehension.

EPAK Volunteer All Stars - Dianne Otterby



“Belonging to the Ravenswood community is a true joy, and it is my privilege to do whatever I can,” says Dianne Otterby. Her 20 year career as a teacher in Ravenswood City School District included serving as a Mentor Teacher, often mentoring 10 to 20 new teachers while running a classroom of her own. She played an integral role in the development of EPAK and was on the board of directors from 1994

For Youth by Youth Belle Haven Year 2 (\$7,000) -

In an area fractured by turfs and ethnic divisions, where young people are often forced to choose a side, FYBY trains teachers and students on ways to battle gang influences and violence through a Positive Behavior Support program.

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

to 2007, serving as Treasurer for 10 years. Dianne evaluated teacher grant applications for several years and still identifies Sponsored Projects. She excels at coordinating district needs and outside volunteers and resources. The Costaño Library Project, to which she contributed heavily, was a major undertaking and huge success. Dianne currently leads our school book drive efforts. She has collected, sorted, and delivered over 25,000 books for the district to-date! Dianne’s commitment to the children remains steadfast and constant – and for that we all are better off.



Annual EPAK Day - A Celebration to Remember

The East Palo Alto Academy hosted EPAK Day on May 8th. EPAK board members, volunteers and donors heard principal Nicki Smith talk about innovative ways teachers have used EPAK grants to strengthen education at the school. Attendees enjoyed a surprise performance by the student band showing their appreciation for a music program funded by an EPAK Sponsored Project. Dr. Smith then led a classroom tour where participants observed teacher grant recipients in action.

EPAK East Palo Alto Kids Foundation
EAST PALO ALTO KIDS FOUNDATION
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Mark Your Calendar – Former San Francisco Symphony Violinist to Play Benefit December 6, 2:00 pm

Yasuko Hattori, renowned musician and EPAK supporter, once again will share what is sure to be another virtuoso performance. Join us on **Sunday, December 6th at 2:00pm** at the Eastside College Preparatory Performing Arts Center at 1041 Myrtle Street in East Palo Alto. Please contact Laura Roberts at laura@epak.org for further information. All proceeds from the recital will benefit teachers and students in Ravenswood district schools.