

Since 1993, the East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK) has been a community-based, all-volunteer organization whose mission is to promote educational opportunities by awarding grants to teachers in the classrooms of East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park.

Fall 2010

## Record Fundraising Year Increases Outreach

For the first time in its 17-year history, EPAK reached \$300,000 in annual donations. As a direct result, EPAK can guarantee two rounds of funding this school year and will expand grant-making to specialist teachers, in addition to full-time, credentialed classroom teachers.

Also, in recognition of the challenges teachers face to lower the dropout rate among high school students, teachers at

Phoenix Academy, Community School South and East Palo Alto Academy high schools were invited to apply for grants. This represents another "first" for EPAK which has traditionally focused on grades K-8.

President **Laura Roberts**, attributes this year's fundraising success to "a major increase in foundation gifts, much of it due to the excellent work of our Grants Manager, **Shannon Greene**."

## EPAK Awards Grants (and more!) to New Teachers



At a Ravenswood District teacher orientation event in August, EPAK Board members **Lydia Moran** and **Tami Espinosa** surprised new teachers with money to start up their classrooms. Thanks to a generous donation from **The John and Marcia Goldman Foundation**, 24

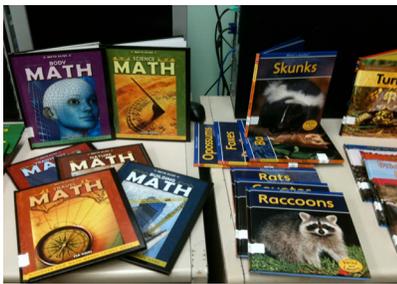
delighted teachers received grants up to \$300 each to make their classrooms more welcoming to their students.

In addition, materials returned by K-4 teachers from the June closure of the East Palo Alto Academy elementary charter campus of Stanford New Schools were made available to new Ravenswood District teachers in August.

Since the money and materials were given before the first week of school, teachers were able to better prepare for the arrival of their new students. This is the fourth year that EPAK has awarded grants to new teachers at the beginning of the school year.

## Sponsored Projects Updates

*In response to donors who wish to make an impact on more than a single classroom of students, EPAK launched a Sponsored Projects Grant Program. Since 2007, EPAK has successfully completed 15 projects, putting over \$200,000 additional dollars to work in EPA schools.*



### • Stanford New Schools Donates Leveled Book Collection to EPAK

With the closure of the East Palo Alto Academy elementary school campus in mid-June, the Stanford New Schools charter moved their 5th grade to its high school site next to Willow Oaks school and donated its extensive leveled books collection to EPAK. Volunteers **Laura Roberts**, **Marco Chavez**, **Lydia Moran**, **Julie Mahowald**, **Curran Mahowald** and **Haley**

**Jones** helped to pack and move the entire K-4 elementary library collection to temporary district storage.

A plan for moving the collection to another school with appropriate space, shelving and training is currently in negotiation. Thank you **Stanford** for ensuring this wonderful resource will continue to enhance literacy for Ravenswood students!

• **Math and Science Books on Display** In May, San Mateo County Office of Education's **Kris Cannon**, **Costaño's** principal **Gina Sudaria** and librarian **Martha Andrade** hosted a reception for the EPAK board of directors in the newly refurbished **Costaño School** library. Science books purchased by a sponsored project donation from **Genentech** were displayed throughout the library. **Kris** thanked EPAK board members for their continued commitment to raising literacy in the district. EPAK also gave **Costaño School** \$5,226 to refurbish a curriculum book room into a leveled book room and small group instruction space.

• **Summer Music Camp** Over the summer, the FYBY EPA Music Initiative held a summer band academy including piano,

drum, guitar, and Hip Hop Band lessons. All classes were free of charge to EPA youth thanks to funding from the **Marin Community Foundation**. Many of the students who attended instrumental music classes at school last year through this initiative were able to continue to make progress through this summer program. The summer culminated in a community Open Mic performance where youth and adults came together to jam and celebrate their love of music.

### • Summer Kinder Readiness Classes

In August, **Brentwood Academy** Principal, **Tami Espinosa**, reached out to the families of children enrolled for kindergarten who had never been to preschool. Thanks to a generous donation from a long-time EPAK donor, the school was able to provide Kinder Readiness classes to 20 students which ran for 3 weeks from 9am-12pm each day. "I am very happy to report that the first week of the regular school year was much improved, not a tear was shed at drop off time. Teachers were able to get through more instruction during the first week of school than during the first three weeks of last year."

## Community Sponsors

### • EPAK receives "Nickels for Non-Profits" from Whole Foods



**Palo Alto** Whole Foods Market Palo Alto chose the East Palo Alto Kids Foundation to be a beneficiary of their *Nickels for Nonprofits* program. From July through September, shoppers who designated 5 cents for every reusable bag they brought in helped the environment and gave EPAK nearly \$1100! **Perrie Pagnotta**, the Marketing Team leader at Whole Foods Market Palo Alto, was thrilled when EPAK applied saying, "We've been looking for

a way to support East Palo Alto schools for years!" Thanks to EPAK board member **Lee Dinneen** for coordinating this effort and to volunteers **Sue Pelosi, Laura Roberts, Mary Noonan, Tami Espinosa, Marco Chavez** and **Cindy Chin** for manning tables in front of the store to share information about EPAK.

• **Borders Summer Book Drive for EPAK** Borders shoppers purchased over 40 boxes of new books valued at over \$16,000 for distribution to K-8 schools in East Palo Alto. Thanks to the staff at Borders in Sunnyvale for helping to promote literacy in East Palo Alto's schools where the majority of students come from non-English speaking households. Also, thanks to EPAK volunteers **Lydia Moran** and **Dianne Otterby** for coordinating this effort.

## EPAK Volunteer All Stars - Will Chen



Thanks to **Will Chen's** web programming expertise, EPAK was able to modernize its teacher micro-grant application process. Now, teachers easily complete and submit their applications online. This allows the Allocations Committee to share information during the approval process and provides a database for tracking and reporting. "Working with EPAK lets me combine two interests of mine – computers and giving back to the community" says Chen.

Will is also EPAK's webmaster, and worked with volunteer web designer, **Negar Nasoohi**, to redesign and improve **www.epak.org**. Thanks, Will, it looks wonderful! Please be sure to visit our site to learn more about EPAK and our work in the Ravenswood District.

*EPAK needs volunteers to join their Communications Committee. If you have good writing skills and experience in Public Relations, Graphic Design or Social Media, please contact [info@epak.org](mailto:info@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 or [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org)*



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**Granting Opportunity in Every Classroom**

## EPAK Day - May 2010 at East Palo Alto Charter School

It was a windy day by the bay at the East Palo Alto Charter School, but it was the amazing kids that blew away the attendees! In each classroom, the EPAK friends, volunteers and donors saw the results of EPAK's fundraising efforts. In one of the 3rd grade classes, a musical performance was under way. Using the rhythm sticks acquired with an EPAK grant, the students demonstrated how they were learning beat and tempo. Attending EPAK Day proves that all of the hard work and donations are worth it. To our great delight, one attendee even made a large additional donation on his way out.



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