



East Palo Alto Kids Foundation

The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation

The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK) is a community-based, all-volunteer organization whose mission is to promote academic success for students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park by providing cash grants directly to classroom teachers and other frontline educators.

Founded in 1993, EPAK secures and distributes contributions from individuals, corporations, service organizations and foundations to help those educating the children in the most direct and immediate way possible.



P.O. Box 50542
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Message Phone:
(650) 852-9398

Website: www.epak.org

Email:
epakidsfd@yahoo.com



EPAK Helps to Bridge the Educational Funding Divide

At a time when state budget woes force schools to depend on education foundations to restore essential programs and instructional activities, it has become apparent that wealthier communities can fundraise more easily from their parent communities and offer more educational programs than their less wealthy neighbors.

"The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation can't compete with the fundraising capacities of neighboring communities like Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos" said Tasha Castañeda, President of EPAK, and a resident within the Ravenswood City School District. "The reality is that East Palo Alto schools do not have the financial resources within their own parent community to fund an education foundation. Help needs to come from the wider community."

The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation raised \$118,000 in 2003-2004 and \$179,000 in 2004-2005 (due to an unexpected windfall of \$52K). These amounts are what an average elementary school PTA raises in neighboring communities.

In stark contrast, Palo Alto's "Partners in Education" (a collaboration between the Palo Alto Foundation for Education and All Schools fund), the Los Altos Education Foundation and the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation raised upwards of \$1 million in 2004-

2005 and plan to raise near \$1.4 million this year.

The EPAK board has made fundraising its highest priority for 2005-2006. Service organizations and corporations have played a much larger role this year, donating over \$65,000 to EPAK. However, Fundraising Chair, Judith Steiner, notes that "EPAK needs a lot of donors who give us \$25 a year, and a few hundred "major" donors who give us \$500 to \$1000. Building this individual donor base will be our focus for this year."

Approximately 450 individual grants of \$350 each were awarded in 2003-2004. The benefit to kids was quick and direct. An EPAK grant is often the only money available to teachers to purchase resources needed to overcome the challenges of educating kids from this predominantly non-English speaking area. Maura Marino, a 10th grade teacher at EPA High School, says she was able to "kick-start a literacy campaign using books that sparked my students' interests...the results have been amazing!"

Tasha Castañeda expressed her hope that EPAK will continue to play an increasing role in bringing educational funding and program equity to East Palo Alto schools. "As a teacher in the Ravenswood District for seven years, I know that a small grant can go a long way toward making teachers feel valued. And the students benefit as a result."

"East Palo Alto schools do not have the financial resources within their own parent community to fund an education foundation. Help needs to come from the wider community."

Board of Directors: Officers:

Tasha Castañeda,
President

Mary Noonan,
Vice President

Laura Roberts,
Vice President

Jocelyn Guansing,
Secretary

Dianne Otterby,
Treasurer

Board Members:

Steve Bowles

Debbie Dasker

Martha Hanks

Libby Lukrich

Judith Steiner

Barbara Susco

Marisol Vazquez

Major Sources of Funding:

American Century Foundation

Bancroft Foundation

Callison Family Foundation

Citigroup Foundation

Midpeninsula Bank

Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund

SAP

Scandling Family Foundation

Silicon Valley Realtors Charitable Foundation

Sobrato Foundation

Thomas & Ancella Toldrian

Town Crier Holiday Fund

University Rotary

Wells Fargo Bank