

Founded in 1993, the East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK) is a community-based organization promoting educational opportunities by awarding grants to teachers in the classrooms of East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park.

Fall 2011

## Micro Grants Program Update - EPAK Extends a Helping Hand

Thanks to the generosity of our individual, foundation and corporate sponsors, EPAK Board President Tami Espinosa announced that for this fall cycle, EPAK was able to increase our support of the Ravenswood District teachers and students in three ways.

**First, we increased the Fall Microgrant awards from \$500 to \$600.** Due to severe cuts in Ravenswood District budgets, class sizes have increased by approximately 20%. Now more than ever, teachers need all the help they can get to stretch their resources as far as possible.

**Second, we voted to give every teacher who is new to the district a \$250 grant to help set up their classroom.** Teachers often spend their own money to add curriculum posters, calendars, learning charts and other items to make the classroom more engaging for their students. Since teachers in the Ravenswood District earn an average of

\$22,000 less than teachers in neighboring communities, our \$250 grant has a big impact on kids and teachers. So far we have written checks to 48 new teachers for a total of \$12,000.

**Third, we are extending the Microgrants program to teachers at the high school level.** In response to the Ravenswood District cuts, teachers at East Palo Alto Academy, East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy, and South Community High School are now eligible for the \$600 award. As a result, EPAK is now supporting classroom essentials and enrichment materials for children pre-K to 12th grade - from the Ravenswood Child Development Center all the way through these high schools.

*EPAK's mission is simple. Support teachers and students. Thank you to all of our donors for enabling us to lend a helping hand during these challenging times.*

## Costano School Hosted EPAK Day 2011



On May 25, EPAK Day at Costano School provided a vibrant example of EPAK donations at work. Guests included donors, community members, friends and local dignitaries.

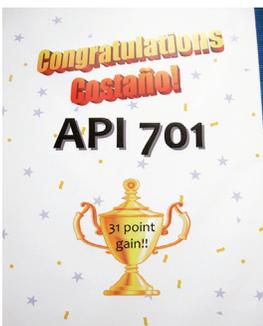
A highlight of the day was a spoken word presentation by Alisha Fitzhugh's 5th graders. In each classroom, teachers expressed their heartfelt apprecia-

tion to EPAK's supporters. "We wouldn't be able to provide the depth of learning without the materials that I buy with my EPAK grant," explained a 3rd grade teacher. Student-led tours wrapped up the event.

Thank you to Costano's principal, **Gina Sudaria**, for her help in arranging this fantastic annual event.



## Ravenswood Schools Made Significant Gains in Achievement



Ravenswood City School district is proud to boast an increase of 79 Academic Performance Index (API) points over the last three years.

The API is the cornerstone of California's Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. It measures the academic performance and growth of schools on a variety of academic measures.

"All of our schools have shown double and even triple digit growth since 2008", said Superintendent Maria De La Vega. Brentwood Academy became the first Ravenswood school to hit the coveted 800 mark with an API of 816. East Palo Alto Charter School remains the top scorer with an API of 866. All but one school in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park made significant gains.

EPAK is proud of the progress that schools have made and remains committed to supporting teachers and their classroom projects.

## Happy 75th Birthday Mary Noonan!



Long time EPAK volunteer Mary Noonan celebrated her 75th birthday this summer, and East Palo Alto students have a reason to celebrate!

In lieu of gifts, Mary asked her friends and family to donate to EPAK... and they did! We received more than \$1,500 in honor of Mary's milestone birthday. The

party was hosted at the Rohrer home in Redwood City, and the celebration featured delicious BBQ and the marvelous desserts that are Mary's trademark. Many EPAK volunteers and donors joined in the festivities.

*Please consider following in Mary's footsteps, and designating EPAK as the recipient of your upcoming birthday, wedding, or other celebratory gifts.*

## EPAK Volunteer All Stars - Laura Roberts



EPAK is very fortunate to have past President Laura Roberts continuing to serve on the board. Beyond the presidency, Laura has filled many roles and contributed greatly during her tenure including chairing the Communications Committee, developing and chairing the Sponsored Project program, and participating in the Board Development and Fundrais-

ing committees.

Laura drove EPAK's three year strategic planning process including succession planning and ensured a smooth transition of EPAK officers over the past three years. Laura gives to EPAK at a strategic level but also rolls up her

sleeves and packs book donations in a school library when the need arises.

"My parents were both educators," explains Laura, "and EPAK's support of the individual teacher provides direct and immediate results to the classroom, making it very compelling for me to serve here."

EPAK is very grateful to Laura for her term as President and for the demonstrable results she has brought to our organization and the population we serve.

*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) 479-6716 or [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org)*



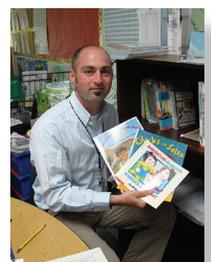
**East Palo Alto Kids Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 50542**  
**Palo Alto, CA 94303**

**Granting Opportunity in Every Classroom**

## EPAK Provides nearly \$150,000 in Teacher Grants

EPAK uniquely provides micro grants directly to teachers in the public schools located in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park, including district and county-chartered schools. Approximately 372 educator micro grants were awarded in the 2010-2011 academic year for a total of \$148,775.

*For more information or to make a donation visit [www.epak.org](http://www.epak.org) or please contact [info@epak.org](mailto:info@epak.org).*



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