

EPAK

EAST PALO ALTO KIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS

Since 1993, 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.

Thank You EPAK

By Cristian C., 9th Grader at East Palo Alto Academy

Thanks to the money given to our school by EPAK, we have had the opportunity to buy a variety of books. The books include memoirs like *Warriors Don't Cry* where students like myself got to learn about the struggles and risks that people of color faced in order to gain equality. If it wasn't for books like that, I would have never taken school so seriously. At the beginning of the year, reading was my least favorite activity, and I never read in my spare time. Now I see myself reading books that I would have never imagined... Thanks to EPAK, my peers and I have had an amazing year reading books that benefit us in many ways.

Join Us At EPAK!

To donate to or volunteer for EPAK, please visit epak.org or email us info@epak.org.



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Executive Update

This fall, I'm pleased to report that the impact of EPAK has never been greater. We recently awarded 226 grants, bringing more than \$133,000 to East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park classrooms.

EPAK is helping a district effort to build Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. Derek Ang, a science teacher at East Palo Alto Academy High School, used his EPAK grant to buy a scroll saw for their Maker Space.

Using the saw, according to Derek, has enabled his students to engage in real-world engineering projects and has boosted the appeal of STEM as a career direction. The addition of STEM learning aids in Nelson Hunter's fourth-grade class at Los Robles Magnet Academy has piqued students' curiosity and intensified their hunger to learn.

EPAK funding reaches the vast majority of Ravenswood City School District teachers, and we're working to close the remaining gap. Our starter grants for new teachers enable them to equip their classrooms for the best possible learning experience.

We have transformed our grant giving processes by using technology to provide faster and easier online grant application and reporting. We offer tutorials that help teachers write more compelling grant applications. Less paperwork means we can all spend more time where it's really needed.

Finally, EPAK prides itself on the dedication of its hard-working board members. We are sad to see three long-serving members - Tami Espinosa, Martha Hanks and Julie Mahowald - move on to new pursuits. With 39 years of combined board experience, they leave an incredible legacy and positive impact on thousands of students. We thank them deeply for their significant contributions to EPAK.

Inspirational EPAK Day

On May 19 at East Palo Alto Academy, more than 25 donors and volunteers gathered for EPAK Day to hear about the dreams and aspirations of students, tour the school, and witness the impact EPAK is making in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park schools.

Principal Amika Guillaume shared a powerful video that captures the spirit of the school, and she described challenges that many students must overcome. With a student population of 75% English Language Learners and two-thirds from families with an 8th grade education, this 9-12 school still has a 90% graduation rate.

A heartfelt moment was when a teacher described how EPAK grants help in two ways. The first is with financial support in the classroom. The second is by showing respect for teachers. She touchingly explained how the simple act of writing checks directly to teachers conveys a trust and respect in their work that they truly appreciate.



Lee Dineen
EPAK Board President

Teacher Grant Highlights

EPAK grants funded hundreds of books and enabled teachers to purchase basic classroom items such as math protractors, science fair display boards, batteries for calculators, logic puzzles and board games. EPAK also enabled "first" experiences hundreds of children will never forget.

This year 4th graders at Brentwood Academy experienced a field trip many California students take for granted. EPAK funded their trip to Sacramento to see the State Capitol and learn about the history and customs of the first Californians. Students shared how much they enjoyed this experience - especially the cannon blast at Fort Sutter - and the simple fun of a bus trip with schoolmates singing and having a great time together.

Seeing *Antony and Cleopatra* performed at the African American Shakespeare Company in San Francisco was the first theater experience for most East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy 11th and 12th graders. For the students who were reading *Macbeth* at the time, seeing the gestures, body language and costumes of the actors on stage really brought Shakespeare's work to life.

To help students in the Ravenswood City School District, please make your tax-deductible donation today at www.epak.org.



Welcome New EPAK Board Members:

Welcome Sara Hackett, Annie Howard, Cris Terborgh and Saul Zeveda to the EPAK Board. The new members bring a range of extensive experience as classroom teachers, specialists, in administration, and in the non-profit sector.

EPAK is a Top-Rated Nonprofit:

We have been honored with one of the first Top-Rated Awards of 2016 from GreatNonprofits!
<http://greatnonprofits.org/org/east-palo-alto-kids-foundation>



East Palo Alto Kids Foundation
PO Box 50542 Palo Alto, CA 94303
www.epak.org info@epak.org

GRANTING OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY CLASSROOM

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