

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.

Fall Grants

This fall, EPAK made 200 grants to teachers totaling \$120,000.

EPAK Day 2017

On May 25, EPAK donors and volunteers visited Brentwood Academy for the annual EPAK Day. Attendees met teachers, toured classrooms, and saw the huge difference EPAK makes for students and their teachers. Attendees were treated to a beautiful chorus of young voices singing "World's Greatest." It was a joyful and moving event.



Support EPAK!

"EPAK not only provides financial support, but it shows the kids, and more importantly the teachers, that other people, in other communities, care about what they are doing."

Bill McFarland, Long-time EPAK Donor

Executive Update

Earlier in my career, I served as the treasurer of a Bay Area school district where donations flowed in continuously from parents and the local community. From a program funding point of view, the world was our oyster. It was a privileged position to be in, but it started weighing on my mind. I thought: *why not put my skills to use in a district with less available money and make a difference to children in need?*

These thoughts eventually led me to EPAK, where I've proudly served as president for three years. In this time, I've seen marked changes in the community. Despite their Silicon Valley location, East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park are home to some of the most underfunded, under-resourced communities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

A drive through the streets today reveals change is afoot. Former city blocks have been demolished and replaced by gleaming glass and brick commercial buildings, lush landscaping and the trappings of those that work in them, from bicycle racks to branded coffee bars to roof terraces. Yes, lured by cheaper land values, technology companies are beginning to move in.

While local job opportunities are welcome, it would be a mistake to think the area is gentrifying and no longer needs assistance. In fact, the changes are bringing acute new pressures to Ravenswood schools. Housing prices and living costs are rapidly rising and residents can't afford what they once could. Many families are being squeezed into inadequate living situations. Some 40% of area students are now classified as homeless: living in shared apartments, converted garages, shelters, RVs and cars.

District schools are feeling the pinch, with students arriving at school stressed and unable to focus due to their cramped living and sleeping conditions. So, while you may be seeing superficial improvements to the area's streets, please know your support of EPAK and the children in these communities is more vital than ever.

Lee Dinneen
EPAK Board President

Teacher Grant Highlights

For over twenty years, EPAK has improved the education and future of thousands of students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park. This fall, teachers submitted grants for exciting and innovative projects in addition to core teaching tools that surrounding school districts take for granted.



With help from EPAK, students at Willow Oaks will create with clay, Pre-K students will witness science and the life cycle through butterfly kits, and Ravenswood sixth graders will learn how cells, tissues, and organisms work together through the hands-on lab experience of dissection.

Thanks to EPAK grants, hundreds of students will be able to experience enriching field trips to Hidden Villa, the Oakland Zoo, the Children's Discovery Museum, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Students will learn about animal habitats at CuriOdyssey at Coyote Point and study the Ohlone Indians at the San Mateo County History Museum.

At every grade level, grants were made to purchase reading material for a wide range of levels, and tools to help build literacy and to promote a lifelong love for reading.

To help students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park schools, please make a tax deductible donation at www.epak.org



Board Member News:

EPAK welcomes Shafi Saxena and Nishi Pallai to the Board of Directors. Shafi is a global marketing executive who has been volunteering with arts- and education-centric causes for most of her life. Nisha is a tech industry veteran who is passionate about helping all children have access to a high quality education. We also thank outgoing board member Cris Terborgh for her wonderful service to EPAK.

Inspiration:

"The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child, it is whether we can afford not to" - Marian Wright Edelman

Find us on 

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GRANTING OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY CLASSROOM

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