



Madera Matters

President's Message

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Happy New Year! If you're like me, you've already made and broken several New Year's resolutions...it's an annual tradition for most people. As the New Year begins, though, I have a suggestion for a New Year's resolution that can really make an impact and that is worth sticking with.

I'd like to ask each Madera family to commit to spending ten hours during the rest of the school year volunteering to help our school and our kids. We're fortunate that our parents contribute money so generously to the school...and your time can be even more valuable.

There are many opportunities to help...

- Volunteer in your child's classroom
- Offer to drive on a field trip
- Help with International Night
- Join the auction committee
- Help clean up after a school event
- Help in the library
- Volunteer to work in the garden
- Attend a school board meeting or write emails to the board about education in our district

There is a core group of wonderful parents who are at nearly all events, most meetings, and really are the "engine" for all the great work that is done at Madera. Their great work could be even better with more support. If each family could volunteer just ten hours—less than two hours a month—it would have a great impact on our school and our kids. Ask your classroom teacher for ways you can help, come to a PTA meeting, or email Negar Souza (negtasoul@comcast.net) or Natalie Borreani (nborreani@sbcglobal.net) to offer to help.

Portola, Mira Vista, and Madera... future plans?

There have been a lot of questions lately about the Portola rebuild, the expansion of Mira Vista to a K-8 school, and the possible addition of a sixth grade at Madera. I don't

Madera Matters,
January 2010

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know where all this will lead, and won't write more here, because by the time you read this, plans may have changed again. I will try to keep everyone up-to-date via email updates, and we will schedule follow-up meetings at Madera regarding both Portola and Mira Vista—and if plans gel for a Madera sixth grade, and how that might be incorporated, I'll post an update immediately. Meanwhile, I'd encourage everyone from the Madera community to contact our board and superintendent to let them know what you think. When you do so, it's important to remember that the school district serves many West Contra Costa communities, not just El Cerrito. Like Madera, most WCCUSD schools draw students from several cities—please bear this in mind when you write or speak at board or other meetings.

Thank you to our volunteers!

December was a very busy month for everyone, and there were lots of events, deadlines, and plans for every family. It was great to see such a huge turnout for the Winter Sing Along—thanks to everyone who helped make this happen...I'm especially grateful to the event chair, Sandra Oliver, who allowed herself to be "volunteered" for this annual gathering. The second installment of the Barnes & Noble fundraiser was equally successful—and it was great to see so many Madera folks at the bookstore on a rainy Sunday! Thanks to Lianne Tsujimoto-Wong, Gail Tsujimoto-Cho, Barbara McCormick-Degnan, and Elaine Alexander for making it happen! Many thanks to Jessica McGuire for stepping up again to organize a successful PTA Yard Sale, and to her many volunteers. The garden committee was active in December as well, and many parents helped with Kindergarten orientation to help welcome next year's families to the Madera community. Special thanks, as well, to Michael Balmaceda for keeping our website up-to-date—it's a great resource and a handy link for contacts and information (maderapta.com).

Spring Initiatives and Coming Events

I hope to have encouraging progress to report on budget initiatives for this year at our next PTA meeting. In the coming months, I'm hopeful for progress on school music initiatives, math & science programs, soccer goals and a better fence for the lower playground, and more. Please come to PTA meetings to learn more and see how you can help make these plans a reality. This month is the annual Madera Art Show on January 26th. We'll have our first PTA meeting of 2010 on February 8th, and the popular International Night is scheduled for March 18th. Plans are underway for the Madera Auction and dinner on April 17th—mark your calendars!

Thinking Ahead...

In the next few months, we'll be assembling our Nominating Committee and seeking out candidates for next year's PTA officers. This is a great opportunity to get more involved in our school community and share your ideas and expertise—and it's a very rewarding investment of time, and a great way to stick with that New Year's resolution! Please ask me or any other PTA officer for more information, or come to a PTA meeting to learn more.

~David Miller

School Board Contacts (continued from pg. 1)

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For more information, see the school district web site, a great resource for understanding these critical issues. It's:

<http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/>

Got News?

The deadline for the next issue of the Madera PTA Newsletter is Monday, February 22.

Please submit items for events that will occur in March or April, or any ideas for articles, to Clare Sheridan at claresher@yahoo.com.

Please include your phone number in case of questions.

Thanks!

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Art Show projects due, Tuesday, January 19
- ◆ Madera Art Show, Tuesday, January 26, 6-8 pm
- ◆ Site Council meeting, Monday, February 8, 3 pm
- ◆ PTA meeting, Monday, February 8, 7:15 pm
- ◆ No school—Winter Break, February 15-19
- ◆ Site Council meeting, Monday, March 8, 3 pm
- ◆ PTA meeting, Monday, March 8, 7:15 pm
- ◆ International Night, Tuesday, March 18

It's Time for the 2010 Madera Art Show!

Join us for this great event!

The multi-purpose room goes black with a new wallpaper treatment so that the art work really stands out. A lot of thought goes into placement so that each piece is displayed to its best advantage. Any kind of art can be submitted. Last year a group of kids made a collage accompanied by an original rap song called "Obama Nation!" Ms. Miller's class did a group project—a giant rendition of Van Gogh's Starry Night. There was a mobile, several fun dioramas and even a copper palm tree made by one kid in her father's metal shop! There were gorgeous paintings, mosaics, ceramics, drawings, collages and sculptures in every direction and as far as the eye could see. It was a stunning display! This year looks just as promising!

Come join the fun on January 26th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose room! Tiffany Carrico's Portola Jazz ensemble will be there performing a live set of some of their most popular tunes. There will be complimentary sparking beverages to toast our artists with, and hors d'oeuvres too. Make an evening of it and stay for dinner! Those intrepid 5th grade fundraisers will be there hosting Cafe Della Madera with pasta and marinara sauce (made by Madera's own Nava family) and salad from Madera's own garden! (Contact Traci or Mike Stuart at 215-1528 or mtmcstuart@comcast.net for tickets).

There still is time to be the parent of a celebrated artist at this event! Submit your child's masterpiece on Tuesday, January 19th in the multi-

purpose room from 8:00-10:00 am or 11:30 am-12:00 pm for PM kindergarten drop-off. There will be no judging and all entries will be accepted. For more information, consult the flyer in the blue folders.

If you want to share the limelight with your child artist and be more than just a guest at this event, you can help to make it happen! The Art Show is a PTA-sponsored event put together by parent volunteers. Volunteer positions are being filled cheerfully even as we speak. Contact Natalie Roth-Corti by phone at 510-620-0162 or e-mail her at natanddino@sbcglobal.net. See you there!