



THE OLD MILL CREEK

www.oldmillschool.org
2008-2009 Issue No. 4

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Get Ready to “Cool the Earth”

Old Mill will be getting cooler in 2009.



This January the Student Council will be launching a school wide initiative known as “Cool the Earth.” The program is an effort to increase awareness in our school community about climate change and our ability to make a difference. The program will empower students and their families to take actions to reduce their carbon footprint and thereby have a positive impact on the climate.

Cool the Earth will launch Friday, January 9th with an engaging kickoff assembly. Over the following three months the program will highlight actions students and their families can complete to reduce their carbon emissions. Students will receive meaningful incentives for participation and we will track our ongoing progress as a community. *So get ready to get cool in 2009!*

Kiddo! Music and Dance Performances

There are a number of dance and music performances this month, all thanks to Kiddo! and the families and community that support it. Events at Old Mill are listed on the calendar to the right along with the 5th Grade Chorus Concert. There are others events at the Middle School (MVMS Chorus, Orchestra and Band) that you can enjoy as well. Check out the calendar on the Kiddo! website for times, dates and locations (www.kiddo.org).

CALENDAR

- Friday, December 5
PTA Exec. & General Meeting
8:45/9:00 a.m. Old Mill
- Wednesday, December 10
School Board Meeting
6:00 p.m. District Office
Fifth Grade Chorus Concert
MVMS 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, December 12
Dance Performance 4th & 5th gr.
2:00 p.m. Old Mill
- Tuesday, December 16
3rd & 4th Grade Chorus Concert
2:20 p.m. Old Mill
- Monday, December 22 to
Friday, January 2
Winter Recess
No School
- Monday, January 5
School Resumes
- Thursday, January 8
It Takes A Village Speaker
Event—Time/Location TBD
- Friday, January 9
PTA Exec. & General Meeting
8:45/9:00 a.m. Old Mill
- Wednesday, January 14
School Board Meeting
6:00 p.m. District Office
- Monday, January 19
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No School
- Monday, January 26
Staff Development Day
No School

DROP DON'T STOP SCHEDULE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 8
WEEK OF JANUARY 5
WEEK OF JANUARY 20
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 23

ROOM 11
ROOM 9
ROOM 7
ROOM 5
ROOM 3

WEEK OF DECEMBER 15
WEEK OF JANUARY 12
WEEK OF JANUARY 27
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9
WEEK OF MARCH 9

ROOM 10
ROOM 8
ROOM 6
ROOM 4
ROOM 15



PTA EXPRESS

by Leanne Hansen
& Deborah Goldman



December is a time of celebration and giving, and also a time of reflection and thanks to all those who have helped our children and our school community. Our inspirational teachers, principal, aides, and staff continue to provide a rich and varied learning environment for our children. Our kind custodians work long hours to ensure that our school is a clean and well-ordered place for the children to learn. Our parent volunteers have given their time and talents to raise money for programs and supplies that enrich the daily school experience here at Old Mill.

For the PTA, the best news of this year is that we were able to reach our fundraising goals through Lapathon and Book Fair. Thanks to your participation, we will be able to continue to fund programs and classroom support in a way that benefits all of our children and teachers. Residents of Mill Valley showed their overwhelming support for Measure A, which means that we will be able to continue to enjoy our excellent teaching staff and programs for years to come.

While we have much to celebrate at the close of 2008, we know that 2009 will bring more opportunities for learning and participation in our school community. Keep a look out for upcoming dates for Hobby Night, Science Night, and Author's Month—three Old Mill traditions that make our school the vibrant place we have all come to love.

Happy Holidays to you and your families!

A GIANT LAPATHON THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS COMMUNITY!!!!

The final tally is in for our Lapathon fundraiser, and our kids raised almost \$42,000 walking around and around and around and *around* the school just over a month ago. This is just fantastic; some kids walked ten miles and more for their school, and their donors came through even in very turbulent economic times. This money will help plug some of the gaps that decreased state funding has left in our current budget, and we should all be thankful that we live in a community that is able to support its schools in this fashion. Thanks to all of you, and especially to your children, for their hard work!

THE LAPATHON COMMITTEE

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR 2009-10

The Mill Valley School District will be accepting registration papers for kindergarten for the 2009-2010 school year from 1:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the District Office, 411 Sycamore Avenue, on Monday, January 12th, Thursday, January 15th, Monday, February 2nd and Thursday, February 5th. Children are **not** given preference based on date of registration. Any child who will be five as of December 2009 and lives in the Mill Valley School District is eligible. See the MVSD website for forms, requirements, answers to frequently asked questions and more information (www.mvschools.org).

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GRIST

by Jane McDonough



In Site Council last year the topic of P.E. came up as something we needed to look at in a different way. Based on recent national information and focus on childhood obesity, as well as data from our physical fitness exams, our students didn't seem to match up to the profile we might have had for them.

Wouldn't you expect that with all the fitness activities most of our families already have, plus the local sports emphasis, and kids on teams here and there in all sorts of endeavors, that our cardio and our endurance scores would be really strong? Turns out that wasn't borne out by the information our data provided to us when the Site Council took a look at this matter last year. One of our initial- and now ongoing- efforts was to push harder on the walk/roll to school initiative, upping the basic opportunity for students to move, to enjoy the fresh air and our incredible environment, and another was to take a deeper look at the way we were working within our Physical Education curriculum.

We started implementing changes last spring, shifting our emphasis in P.E. toward fitness and away from competitive sports, and we began discussing as a faculty and as a Site Council ways that our whole community could support the notion of P.E. as a serious- even vital- class, deserving of all the elements of respect which are integral to the rest of our classes. Everyone understands that *mens sana in corpore sano** is more than a great Latin quotation. It is clear from brain research on learning that physical activity and good oxygen/blood exchange helps fuel our muscles, and the use of our brain is no exception. Strategic choices were made by the P.E. department on some new equipment which would help focus on fitness as a constant in our students' lives. Numbers were painted on the playground so that students would no longer wander around when it was time to assemble to get started with the day's activities, but could know they would have a designated spot each class. In addition, the P.E. teachers developed, with my support and that of the faculty, a more accurate rubric with which to evaluate students in their P.E. class.

The rubric, circulated to parents and students last spring and this year, is shown below, and models to our students that the class is one in which all students are expected to learn and grow. In general we are happy with the progress and process of these changes. We are prepared to do better on providing advanced warning to families when a child is close to getting a "2". In P.E. Mrs. vanRoyen and Mr. Haskell see all 300 students, so we are grateful to them for their diligence and thought in preparing all of this work, and in implementing it with our children.

One reason we are so committed is that we see the larger lessons that come from students working together under the umbrella of physical education. One student recently told us that he wondered why the teachers were objecting when a student ignored the rules while engaged in an activity aimed at demonstrating team work. "You have put us in a competitive environment, and that means we need to try to win, and that includes cheating!" Although the student may have been speaking in jest- at least partially- it should not be surprising at all that a young person with his or her eyes and ears open to the culture we live in might have that point of view! I'm glad that student raised the issue.

Our job is to make sure we have recognized complex issues such as this and that we address them with our students. Physical Education gives us a wonderful venue for conversations and interactions that get at the center of who our children are as well as who they can be. How they make sense of the world we live in will rely on their ability to problem solve, their ability to see what makes for true integrity, and their ability to differentiate themselves from the trends and practices of others for reasons that come **from within**. Developing strength of character is an area of focus for our Site Council this year!

Specifically here are some further clarifications:

We do not look at the grading rubric through the lens of athletic performance. Parents of athletic children may be surprised by their child's lower grade and likewise children of so-called non-athletic students think their child received a lower grade because of their (perceived) "poor" athletic ability. Earning a 4 in P.E. does not mean the student is an athletic superstar, but rather is a positive member of the PE learning community. Student progress is measured against their individual personal best.

* a healthy mind in a healthy body

Grist continued:

Although we have worked hard at balancing individual and group activities, P.E. is a unique environment for young children because they are around limited competition for the first time. It is imperative as a PE department, that we establish good, honest and respectful behavior in that type of environment.

Old Mill School: Physical Education Evaluation Rubric

4 – Excellent: Student exhibits excellent attitude by showing respect for teachers and peers at all times, participating readily in all activities, and is a positive member of the learning community. The student is ready to help others, try new skills, and solve challenges with others.

3- Fair (Good): Student exhibits a good attitude by showing respect for teachers and peers at most times, participates in most activities though may show occasional resistance, and is generally cooperative and helpful toward others. The student is interested in teamwork and learning how to solve problems with others.

2 – Improvement Needed: Student may have difficulty following directions or listening to the instructor, or participation is inconsistent and practice of activities and skills requires constant prompting from instructors or peers. Teamwork and cooperation may be a challenge. Improvement is needed in one or two of these areas to bring grade up.

1- Poor: Student exhibits disrespect for instructors by not listening and following directions, lack of participation in group or individual activities, or refusal to work cooperatively with others. Two or more areas of concern need to be addressed and improvement is expected in attitude and behavior.

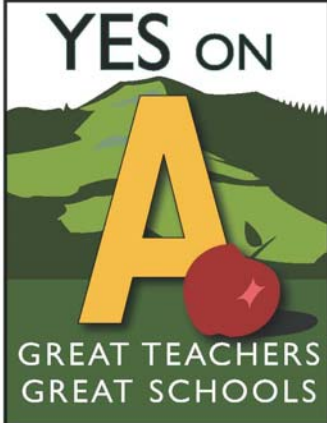
Want to know more? Please feel free to let me or the P.E. teachers know if you have questions or concerns.

THANK YOU MILL VALLEY!

On behalf of all Mill Valley School District students, teachers, and families,
we sincerely thank the voters of Mill Valley for supporting
Measure A and our public K-8 schools.

MILL VALLEY GETS AN "A" IN EDUCATION!

SUPPORTED BY: Leslie Flax Abel • Amybeth Adress • Lori Adress • Suzanne Agosta • Robin Alderson • Mari Allen • Gary Alpert • Julie Althoff • Tim Amys • Jill Anderson • Mary Anderson • Peggy Armbruster • Gus • Margaret Arnold • Wendy Aronson • Gary • Oya Atashkharan • Michele Aubin • Suzanne Austin • Dana Baker-Williams • Katherine & Andrew Barrengos • Tina Barrone • Pauline Barry • Gary Baroff • Maureen Behrs • Michelle Bell • Suzanne Benden-Van Spps • Karen Benke • Ken Benny • Trudy Benny • Andrew Berman • Jeannine Berman • Gideon Bernstein • Leslie Bernstein • Nancy Bernstein • Sandy Bertram • Karen Betzner • Patricia Bigelow • Gary Birnbaum • Kevin & Laura Blair • Barbara Blackman • Lori Boeri • Joan Beesmecker • Jan Belgis • Tuyen Benaoua • CJ Bos • Eric Borsky • Laurie Boscoe • Barbara Bowman • Robin Bower • Gretchen Boyle • James Boyle • Nissa Brady • Andrea & David Brundis • Andrea Brundis • Michele Brass • Elke Bray • Mara Brazier • Michele Braker • Julie Brewer • Yan & Jackie Broad • Vivian Broadway • Dan Brousseau • Jeff Brown • Tracey Lee Brown • Linda Bruns • Carson Buck • Mary Jane Burke • Susan & Jim Burns • Abigail Burton • Elizabeth Burton • California School Employees Association • California Teachers Association • Shells Campbell • Lisa Capretta • Colleen Carr • Karen & Chris Carr • Paul Carroll • Nicole Carter-Guiter • Lindsay Caruso • Suzanne Chase • Grace Chin • Doreen Clack • Cathy Cohen • Deborah Cole • Andrea Collette • John Collins • Nancy Conger • Lori & Mark Coppersmith • Katherine Cope • Susan Copeland • Jennifer Cormier • Beverly Coughlin • Becky Cover • Connelan Cowell • Karen Cray • Stephanie Cuccaro-Alamin • Julie Cullinan • Ben Curtis • Betsy Cutler • Dan Dahlgren • Mary Dale • Lee Darby • Allie Davari • Mark Davis • Gwen Day • Kelly Dais • Rob DeLong • Jim & Barbara Derich • Heidi DeGen • David Deizer • Deborah Dilley • Daniel DiPietro • Dawn Dobris • Heera Dolais • Bruce & Stephanie Dorfman • Allison Downing • Kathryn Drake • John Duncan • Andrea Dunn • Tom Eddington • David Eddy • Tammy Edmondson • Edna Maguire PTA • Keith Ertman • Mary Ellison • Deb Embridge • Deb Embridge EHC • Kenneth • Theo Emison • Karen Fairly • Amy Faulkner • Alex Fax • Cindy Fencon • Douglas & Jane Ferguson • Tracy Fern • Jeanine Ferris • Jose Figueroa • James Firmings • Donna Fisco • Andrew Fisher • Kathy Fisher • Maggie • Cindy Frame • Ingrid Francis • RoseAnn & Tom Frank • Lynn Fraser • Jeffrey Fuchs • David Furbach • Annette Gamba • Tracey & Bryan Gant • Trisha Garkick • Marybeth Gilliam • Amy Glasser • Kurt & Suzi Glauzick • Chris Glauz • Bryce Gourin • Michelle Griffin • David Griffin • Olga Guelder • Nicole Gulati • Daniel Leanne Hansen • Roy & Janet Hardman • Anne Harper • Elizabeth Harvell • Scott • Peter Hawes • Heather Hawkins • William Hazen • Sarah Head • Sven & Sus-Tori Herzog • Christine Hill • Susan Hill • Danica Hilmberg • Bob Hirsatz • Heidi Owen Hubbard • Jim Hudson • Lisa Huffman • Matt Husley • Lance Igman • Ra-Karen Jabbar • Rufus & Hilary Jeffris • Kimberly Jenkins • Eric Johnson • Jay Johnston vanovic • Dan & Sheri Kahn • Janie Karp • Peg Katz • Dee Kauer • Kris Keane • Be Kessel • Monib Khademi • Pam Khsouf • Kiddo! 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A Word from Kiddo! . . .



Kiddo! 2008 Annual Giving Campaign Closing The Books

Our school still has 60 families who have not yet donated to the 2008 annual fundraising campaign, which closes on December 31. Please make your donation today and help Kiddo! reach our \$1.6 million fundraising goal with 100% family participation. Every child benefits, so every family is asked to participate. The requested donation is \$750 per student to cover the cost of services, but donations at all levels are greatly appreciated. With your help, we will continue to fund library and classroom aides as well as technology and the award-winning arts programs that our students enjoy! You can make your donation online at www.kiddo.org or send your check to Kiddo! at 409 Sycamore Avenue.

Welcome Kiddo! Ambassadors

Kiddo! is proud to welcome our new Kindergarten and 1st grade Ambassadors. These wonderful parent volunteers are primed and ready to answer the questions that new families may have about our programs and funding policies. Ambassadors will also help make sure that parents know when Kiddo! events are occurring and help us capture the many great ideas that new families bring to our schools. If you are a Kindergarten or 1st grade parent, look for an email from your Ambassador in the next week.

Holiday Concerts

5 th Grade Chorus Winter Concert	December 10	7pm	MVMS Gym
MVMS Winter Choral Concert	December 11	7pm	MVMS Gym
3 rd & 4 th Grade Winter Choral Concerts	December 16	2:20pm	Old Mill
Winter Band Concert	December 17	7pm	MVMS Gym
Winter Orchestra Concert	December 18	7pm	MVMS Gym

Check out the Kiddo! event calendar <http://kiddo.org/wp-calendar.php> to see all the upcoming Kiddo! related events at your school. Using the "Agenda" view makes the calendar easy to read.

Holiday Shopping

As the season of giving approaches, Kiddo! would like to encourage everyone to shop locally in support of all the Mill Valley merchants and businesses who give their support to our schools. Go to our website to view the list of current business partners www.kiddo.org. Our town is a wonderland of unique gifts, services, restaurants and entertainment, so please remember . . . there's no place like home for your holiday needs!

Shopping online this holiday season? Make your shopping count for Kiddo! Earn up to 10% or more for Kiddo! when you shop at the eScrip Online Mall. If you download the AutoTrack Software from eScrip, you don't need to remember to click through the eScrip mall before shopping. Go to www.eScrip.com, click on the eScrip on-line mall, download autoEARN for eScrip and every time you shop with a participating on-line merchant your contributions are calculated automatically. It's as simple as that! You can also go to www.onecause.com (formerly Schoolpop.com) and shop. It's so easy! You can earn money for Kiddo! by doing what you already do—shopping with your favorite merchants.

SAVE THE DATE: Kiddo! Spring Gala – March 14, 2009

LUNCH PROGRAM FUNDRAISER WITH REVOLUTION FOODS TIMELINE FOR LUNCH ORDERS AND PAYMENTS

<u>Menu Posted</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Payment Due</u>
January 1	February/March	January 28
March 1	April/May	March 25
May 1	June	May 27

Place your order at order.revfoods.com at the time menu is posted. After you place your order, payment must be made for the difference between your future orders and your account balance. Make your check payable to Old Mill PTA and drop it off in the envelope outside the office before 3pm on the due date listed above. To avoid cancellation of your orders, payment must be made by the due date.

News from the Mill Valley Public Library

Congratulations to this year's winners of our annual Bookmark Design Contest: Aubrey (11), Hannah (12), Marlowe (6), Emma (9), and Nick (10). Thanks to the over 600 talented artists who entered the contest – keep up the good work and enter again in September 2009. Brand new bookmarks are available in the Children's Room, so come by and pick up a complete set – they are sure to become collector's items.

December Craft Drop-in Programs – Want to make gifts and have some holiday fun at the library? Kids of all ages are invited to drop in on Wednesdays in December from 2:30 – 4:30 pm. Create your own holiday cards on Dec. 3, make laminated bookmarks and ornaments on Dec. 10, and decorate cookies on Dec. 17. Check our online calendar for program details. (All ages, no sign-up needed.)

FREE movies for kids! We'll be screening great new children's films during winter recess. We'll show Wall-E, Kung Fu Panda, Kit Kittredge and more. Mark your calendar and show up in the Creekside Room at 3:30 pm on December 22, 23, 26, 29, 30, and January 2. Popcorn and pillows are provided, of course. Movie details are available on the library's web calendar.

For information about all of our programs and services, including Live Homework Help, PeRP, and My First Library Card, please visit our website at <http://millvalleylibrary.org> or call 415-389-4292 x106.



It Takes a Village Special Education PTA

Please check our website out to learn how we can help you and your child. We are at www.itavmv.org. Information about our speaker events (including speaker notes and handouts), parent coffees, and playgroups is posted.

MVMS Tour—Monday, December 8th, 8:45 am

Matt Huxley and Dr. Kerri Mills will conduct a tour of MVMS for parents of 5th graders who learn differently. They will discuss resources, including special day classes, for each grade. This will be a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with MVMS. Please let Linda Canepa know you are coming at 389-7711.

Holiday Appreciation Party—Thursday, December 11th, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Masonic Center, 19 Corte Madera Ave.

The District's special education staff will be the guests of honor at a holiday appreciation party. Parents and children are invited to attend and support our teachers. We will have lots of food and beverages. Please come and enjoy!

Speaker Event—"Encouraging an Active Learning Style: Executive Functioning Across the Ages" Thursday, January 8th—a Location TBD

Karen Seekamp and Patricia Holden will speak on one of our most popular topics of the year! Please check out the ITAV website for further details on time and location.

Parent Coffee—Friday, January 16th, 9:00-11:00 a.m.—186 Corte Madera Dr.

Parents of children with learning differences face many challenges. These coffees provide a chance for parents to share information and support each other. Please join us at the home of Tam Valley parent Erica Kelly. If you have questions, please contact Erica at 381-8866 or erica.kelly@gmail.com.

LOLLIPOP's Ice Cream Social—This event was a roaring success. Many District families and others dropped by for an ice cream treat and donated over \$400 to It Takes a Village. Many thanks to District parents Mary and Michael Gassen of LOLLIPOP (and Noe Valley Bakery in SF) for sponsoring this generous fundraiser and donating all of that wonderful ice cream!

Play Group—Thursdays 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Kay Park (weather permitting)

Some children with learning differences have a hard time making friends. Our play group is a great chance for them to build relationships with coaching from parents. Contact Pam Sowerby for additional details or to check weather cancellations (380-9680, psowerby@comcast.net).

Shop Mill Valley Market and Support It Takes a Village!

Mill Valley Market has offered to donate a portion of its proceeds from your grocery shopping to It Takes a Village. When you check out, give the Market the number 7093. It couldn't be easier to support our kids!

Psychologically Speaking by Claudia Trinklein-Engman

Last week, three of my colleagues and I attended a meeting of It Takes a Village, Mill Valley's Special Education PTA, and presented information regarding how the four of us are addressing social skill development within the Mill Valley School District. Several parents asked that I continue a monthly newsletter format in the school newspapers. They also had specific topics on which they requested my immediate input. (I will continue my column and will address issues that I feel are of importance. However, if any of you have specific concerns, do not hesitate to let me know so that I can directly speak to those situations.)

One parent asked the following: How can a parent advise their child if an older kid is bossing him around? E.g. "you can't play on this kick ball team." First of all, all of the schools have a policy that no child can be excluded from play. I would encourage the child to speak up to the older youngster and say that he/she has the right to play. They can also say simply that exclusion is not allowed at school. And if it continues, encourage your child to get help from one of the adults that are always on the playground.

Schools also have peer conflict managers that could help if the child would approach one of them. If neither of these solves the issue at hand, your child can always talk to the principal. There have been some examples at several schools when exclusion from a certain game has gotten out of control or is too rough and the game has not been allowed for a certain period of time. But it is important that your child lets someone know! Sometimes playground exclusion can be very overt.

At the same time, this excluded child could try to find some other activity to join. That may be easier said than done, but encourage him/her at home to talk about other alternatives. But I don't want to lose sight of your youngster's feelings when excluded. As a parent, I would work with him/her on what he not only can do physically to feel better (i.e. find something else to do) but what can he tell himself to feel better on the "inside" (i.e. how can he take care of himself emotionally when not included). You, as a parent, might encourage him to say (inside his head) well, there are always other games to play, it is not fair to exclude anyone and I will tell someone who can help, it feels really bad to be excluded, but I still feel that I am a good player.

Another parent asked what their children should do if they are watching someone being bullied or not included. I am a strong believer in what I call the "silent majority." I don't want to suggest that these children should be the ones to negotiate a solution, but they would be in a very powerful position to stand up for the child being excluded and to verbally support him/her. And if your child feels that it would be appropriate, he/she could always suggest that the excluded child join his/her activity. A simple "Exclusion is not allowed here" should be sufficient. Bullies don't like their victims being rallied around by their peers.

Old Mill Creek Deadlines

Submit any Creek articles by email to drice@cov.com by the deadlines below (no pdf files please):

Articles Due	Published	Articles Due	Published	Articles Due	Published
December 21 st	January 7 th	February 22 nd	March 4 th	April 26 th	May 6 th
January 25 th	February 4 th	March 22 nd	April 1 st	May 24 th	June 3 rd

If you want to see your child in The Creek, please submit photos of school events as jpeg files. Dale Rice, Editor

Old Mill Yearbook Seeking Photos!

Don't forget that the Old Mill Yearbook is looking for photos of Old Mill students at school events, field trips, in the classroom and at play. Please contact Paul Belza at oldmillyearbook@gmail.com for instructions on how to upload your photos using your web browser. No need to make prints, burn CD's, or walk to the main office to drop off your pictures. Thank you for your digital contributions.