

Sequoia Elementary School Community Newsletter: Jan. 4, 2016

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www.SequoiaSchool.net -and- [Facebook.com/groups/sequoiaelementary](https://www.facebook.com/groups/sequoiaelementary)



Three Week Calendar



Wednesdays are minimum days

- Mon Jan 4: **MLK Oratorical Practice Sessions and Workshops Begin**
 - Wed Jan 6: **Epiphany/Three Kings Day**
 - Thu Jan 8: **Dads' Club Meeting**, 7 p.m., Red Boy Pizza (1500 Leimert Boulevard)
 - Sat Jan 10: **FOSS Meeting**, 10 a.m., Dimond Rec Center (3860 Hanley Road), refreshments & childcare provided
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- Mon Jan 18: **School Closed for MLK Holiday**
 - Fri Jan 22: **Last Day for Options Enrollment**
 - Fri Jan 22: **Movie Night**, 5 p.m., Auditorium

Support Silent Auction Sponsors

Please show some love for our Family Dance and (mostly) Silent Auction event sponsors, who have generously agreed to underwrite the cost of hosting the event:

- IBEW Local 595 (www.ibew595.org), arranged by Jason Gumataotao
- Joey Smith of Platt Inc. Real Estate (www.plattinc.com)
- Dimond Improvement Association (www.dimondnews.org), arranged by Joey Smith

This means that ALL of the money raised at the event will go directly toward enrichment programs including library, science, art, music and garden! If you haven't already done so, please mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, Feb. 6 and look for a link to the bidding website very soon!

Auction Items Urgently Needed

We've got some fantastic donations lined up but we'll need more items if we are to reach our fundraising goal. We need all auction items donated by Friday, Jan. 15. So if you've been thinking about donating an item or have friends, clients, customers or family members who might be interested in supporting a good cause and building some community goodwill, now is the time! It's easy: just email us at SequoiaAuctionTeam@gmail.com or complete the simple form on the school website: <http://sequoiaschool.net/calendar-events/dance-auction/>.

All donations are warmly welcomed, but there are some categories where we could especially use your help:

- Lessons/classes: musical instruments, art, photography, cooking, tutoring, sports, dance, voice, etc.
- Restaurants
- Salons and other "treat yourself" services
- Gift baskets

FOSS Meeting This Saturday

Please join us for the first FOSS meeting of 2016 on Saturday, Jan. 9 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the Dimond Recreation Center, 3860 Hanley Road. Childcare and refreshments will be provided.

MLK Oratorical Assembly is Coming

Sequoia's annual MLK Oratorical Assembly is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan 27. That is right around the corner!



Students are invited to recite a poem, essay or speech relating to civil rights, freedom, justice and equality in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as other leaders of peace and justice such as the late Nelson Mandela and Gandhi. Some classes will be preparing their own group presentations while other students can choose to perform as an individual or as a small choral group (two or more students). Top entries go on to the Oakland Unified School District's district-wide competition.

Every year we get approximately 80 of your children to participate. The commitment requires some work and discipline from these brave students. But when your child decides he/she will stand up in front of the school and recite, they grow in all sorts of ways! They develop public speaking skills, fine-tune their comprehension skills as they interpret written work, cultivate work ethic through repeated memorizing and rehearsing, deepen their understanding of equality and social justice, and last but not least, gain self confidence! Moreover, those students choosing to perform as a group learn how to work collaboratively.

As parents and caregivers, we can play an important role by encouraging participation, and then supporting them as they memorize and rehearse their delivery.

Note that each classroom has a binder of oratorical material available for students to choose from. Plenty of material can also be found in the library or online. A child's own written poem/essay would be a wonderful addition to the Oratorical. Do not feel as if you need to wait for your child's teacher to orchestrate or begin this process. Getting started can make the entire process easier for your child, as this is definitely something that will need to be worked on outside of class!

From January 4 – 22, parent volunteer coaches and experienced student orators will be occasionally helping students in the auditorium for some extra coaching sessions. If you are a parent/caregiver looking for a wonderful volunteer opportunity, please consider joining the MLK Oratorical Coaching Team. You would help build students' confidence, and coach them on delivery, articulation, pronunciation, gesturing and stage presence. No skills necessary, just a love of helping kids reach their highest potential!

If you have questions about the Oratorical or would like to volunteer, please contact Damond at damondmoodie@sbcglobal.net.

Students Enforce Drop-off Rules

These awesome 4th and 5th graders are taking their oath seriously as they pledge to make drop-offs safer and more efficient for everyone. They are monitoring the drop-off zone on Hearst Avenue so that you can pull up safely to the curb and wave good bye as your child is escorted to the gate. Please remember that there is NO PARKING at the drop-off zone, even for a few minutes. This curb is to remain free for school buses and cars dropping off students. Follow the signs and the directions of our Sequoia Safety Patrol and we can keep all our squirrels safe and on time to school!

Parental Involvement Survey Results

Last spring the Inclusive School Committee administered a survey of students' families about how involved they are and how included they feel as members of the Sequoia Elementary community. The results have been compiled, and a summary was sent home in December.

We received 145 survey responses, representing 174 Sequoia students in all grades. Respondents were 6 percent African American, 17 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 12 percent Latino/a, 26 percent Multi-racial/ethnic and 39 percent White. While overall satisfaction was high in most areas, there were some differences that emerged when looking at responses by race/ethnicity. Some barriers to parental participation were reported and some ideas of where to focus future efforts were suggested.

You are invited to the January FOSS meeting (Saturday, Jan. 9 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Dimond Rec Center) to join further discussion about the results and possible next steps.

Thank you for participating in the conversation about becoming a more inclusive community for all students and families!

School Closed for MLK Holiday 1/18

Sequoia will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday.

Trường sẽ đóng cửa Thứ 2 Ngày 18 Tháng 1 để mừng lễ Martin Luther King, Jr.

學校會在一月十八日停課一天，來興祝馬丁·路德·金假期。多謝各位家長！

ستغلق المدرسة يوم الاثنين 18 يناير وذلك لعطلة يوم مارتن لوثر كينغ الابن .

Sequoia estará cerrada Lunes, 18 de enero para el Martin Luther King, Jr. vacaciones.

Garden Notes

As we wound down 2015 into the darkest days of the year students learned that on December 22, many of us celebrate 'The Coming of the Light', or winter solstice when from that day onward, until the summer solstice, each day will have a few more minutes of sunlight than the dark days that lead up to it. Students also learned the origin of the tradition of decorating trees in these shorter colder winter days: people who lived (and still live) in the colder winter climates of the world string fruits and nuts they foraged to eat during the winter months, and hang them from the trees as an offering to the animals who have little to forage. As students listened to the story and tradition of winter solstice they strung cranberries and orange slices onto strings and rolled them in bird seeds decorating the big Lincoln Garden apple tree.

During the last week before winter break, the low in the Lincoln Garden was 35°. Most of the pathways are covered in frost in the morning, and the garden does not warm up much as it is in shade most of the day in the winter months. Please be sure if your child has a winter coat to bring to garden class in the new year.



Thank You from artSPARK

While artSPARK may seem like a distant memory, I wanted to extend a belated, but personal note of thanks to everyone who made the event happen this year. From the students who submitted creative and thoughtful work, to the numerous volunteers (parents and kids) who donated food, supplies, energy and their time, we couldn't have done it without you!

Also, I am specifically grateful to RAYLENE SAMSON SUSANNAH PRINZ, who stepped up and shouldered the responsibility of the coordination for the event this year. As an out-going Sequoia family who helped to start this event six years ago, I was pained to think it might be the last one. Then these two committed women took the reins and I feel hopeful that there is still a future for artSPARK.

So here is my plug for next year: This event may seem simple and in many ways it is: spend a heart-warming afternoon with our community, really appreciating and seeing the creative genius of our children. But to maintain the simple feeling and give focus to the artwork, we do a fair amount of background coordination and work. Fortunately, artSPARK is an event that has a lot of small, easily manageable and delegate-able components that a variety of individuals can handle independently. Many hands really do make light work. So...if you love this event like I do, please consider stepping up next year. You really are needed and you really will make a difference!

Again, my thanks to everyone who supported artSPARK this year, in ways both big and small.
Erin Conner (Ginger 5th)

Bret Harte Middle Schools Tours

Attention prospective middle school parents: visit Bret Harte Middle School! Come learn about all the great things that are happening at our amazing neighborhood middle school. Tours will take place on the following dates (all tours begin at 9:30 a.m. and meet in the office):

Friday, Jan. 8
Thursday, Jan. 14



Please call 531-6400 or email gayle.fake@ousd.k12.ca.us to reserve a spot.

Sequoia Shout Outs

Sequoia would not be the wonderful school it is without the efforts of our volunteers. Each week we express appreciation for those efforts.



Thank you from TK and K!
Donations: Walter, Annah, Allen, Caleb
Room 9: gifts
Snow: Ms. D
Box Tops: Walter and Benny
Dimond Library chaperones: Allen's grandma, Aruna, Ms. Brenda
Dictation: Hailey
Snack set-up: Hailey, Aruna, Josh, Elizabeth, Kirsten
Motor Skills: Jeffrey, Keith, Erik, Clara, Kaycee, Efuru, Michelo, C. Banks, S. Weymiller, Caren Kristin, Heather, Matt