

Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



PUMA NEWS

March

2009

A publication of Pine Valley PTA

Jason Law, Principal

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Dates to Note:

Date	Event
March 6	Pine Valley Dance - 6 th graders welcome! 7-9pm in the multipurpose room
Mar. 9-12	Incoming Freshman Nights at Cal High, 7 pm
March 11	PV Ed. Fund Meeting, 7pm in the Conference Room
March 14	Youth-to-Youth Conference
March 16	Cal High counselors at PV to collect 8 th graders' course selection sheets Cal High Choral Performances during lunch periods
March 17	Course Selection Assemblies for 6 th & 7 th graders Staff Appreciation Luncheon
March 18	Cookie Dough Fundraiser Kick-off
Mar. 18-20	Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences - students dismissed at 11:35am
March 20	PV Course Selection Sheets due
March 27	Last day of 3 rd Quarter
April 1	Advanced English & History placement tests for 8 th graders attending Cal High next year
April 1-2	Turn in Cookie Dough Orders
April 6-10	Spring Break Recess
April 29	"Planning for your Future: High School, College, and Beyond" 8 th Gr. Parent Night at PV, 7:00 pm

President's Message - by Collette Ricks & Lani Bari

Congratulations to our Pine Valley honor roll recipients! There have been some changes surrounding how we distinguish and award our honor roll. The honor roll is comprised of students earning a 3.5 grade point average or higher on their January semester report card. PTA purchases the tokens to award their achievement. First of all, every honor roll recipient was presented with a pin designating their grade (and honor roll achievement). In addition to the pin, every 6th grade honor roll honoree received a window decal. 7th & 8th grade **gold** honor roll recipients (4.0) received specially inscribed pens in addition to the pins given to all honor roll recipients. These awards, along with certificates, were presented to them in their core classrooms during the month of February.

We have a team of 5 volunteers currently serving as this year's nominating committee. They are working to put together a slate of candidates for next year's (2009-2010) PTA board. If you are interested in becoming involved in your child's Middle School PTA, we welcome all levels of volunteer participation. There are a variety of PTA positions, and a wide range of time commitments involved. Please feel free to contact us, or a member on the committee, if you would like to learn more information. The nominating committee members are: Beth Beadle, jjbeadle1@yahoo.com, Lori Cade, ibelorbo@hotmail.com, Lisa Chalmers, cycme@pacbell.net, Kristen Holbrook, k10holbrook@hotmail.com, and Lisa Webster, lisawebster@gmail.com.

The cookie dough fundraiser will kick-off on Wednesday, March 18th. Order turn-in days are April 1st & 2nd. This fundraiser benefits each grade level's class fund. Your child's class fund accumulates and moves with them through Middle School. The money is used for promotion activities, an outgoing 8th grade class gift back to the school, and seed money for their freshman class fund at Cal High. Theodora Pappas is the school organizer for the cookie dough fundraiser, and Kathy Ramsey is assisting as our lead PTA volunteer. To help with this fundraiser, either collecting orders or distributing the cookie dough, please contact Kathy at dnkramsey@comcast.net.

A big thank you goes out to Teresa DeHope and her PTA volunteer helpers for catering a lunch for the visiting validation committee this past Friday. The visiting committee met with staff, students, and parents to discuss the programs and curriculum offered at Pine Valley. Their visit was the next step in the California Distinguished School application process.

As you will read about elsewhere in this newsletter, our PTA endorses Measure C to renew local education funding for San Ramon Valley Schools. This funding was approved by voters in 2004 to fund essential academic programs and retain qualified teachers. This vital funding will expire in June 2009 unless Measure C receives a 2/3 majority. For more information about Measure C, we encourage you to visit the SRV Council of PTA website and view the links on the right side of the home page.

Don't forget March 18th-20th (Wed. - Fri.) are conference days, with 11:35am minimum day dismissal. April 6th-10th is spring break. Also, if you are the parent of an 8th grader, please mark your calendars for a special night for 8th grade parents on April 29th at 7pm. Pine Valley counselor Julie Damgen will give valuable information with regard to High School/College/Career paths facing our children of today.

As always, feel free to contact us with your questions & concerns.

Collette Ricks
collettericks@comcast.net

Lani Bari
lanibari@comcast.net

Principal's Message - by Jason Law

It is with great pride that I announce to the Pine Valley community that the Validation Committee that visited our campus on Friday, February 27 gave us a positive recommendation to become a 2008-2009 California Distinguished School. Though it is not official until the committee report is approved by the Superintendent of California Schools, Jack O'Connell, I wanted to share this very special news with our families. Our three visitors, all principals from Bay Area middle schools, were extremely impressed with the students, staff, and programs here at Pine Valley. They now know, as we did all along, that the adults here at Pine Valley do what is necessary to support and connect to your kids to school. The committee was especially impressed with the group of students they met to discuss our signature practices. The students impressed me as well. They spoke confidently and were able to articulate to the visiting team their thoughts about Pine Valley's Writing Project and our intervention programs. For me, it was the highlight of the day. Another special thank you goes to parents, Teresa DeHope and Annamarie Day who prepared an amazing lunch for the team. Across the board, it was a day to celebrate here at Pine Valley.

As the calendar turns to March, it is time to start thinking about registration for next year. Pine Valley's eighth graders will begin the process this month for registration at Cal High and our current 6th and 7th graders will begin the process of thinking about what they want to take next year here at Pine Valley. They will be attending a course selection assembly on March 17 and administrators and counselors will take them through the process. At that point, information will be available on our website that will inform parents of the process, as well. There will not be a parent elective night as in years past. Please visit www.PumaPride.org to get the information you will need to assist your child in the course selection process.

March also brings an opportunity for students, parents and teachers to sit down to discuss academic progress. Remember, parent conferences are March 18-20. Third quarter is consistently a low performing academic period so please take the time to meet with your child's teachers. If you are seeing the same patterns at this point that you have seen throughout this year, please plan on using these dates to develop an intervention plan for your child. This is especially important for our eighth grade students trying to meet promotion requirements.

Finally, it would be irresponsible of me if I did not mention the state's current financial crisis. As you know, our state legislators finally passed a state budget. Unfortunately the budget they passed negatively impacts an educational system already ranked 47th of 50 states. This district is looking at ongoing cuts of almost \$10 million. The expiration of the current parcel tax could not come at a worse time. We need to pull together as a community to meet the fiscal and educational expectations that this community has come to expect.

PTA Endorses Measure C - Laie Nelson & Kristen Holbrook

Both the San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs and the Pine Valley PTA have endorsed Measure C, to renew the education funding measure for our school district. Measure C will appear on a mail-only ballot that will be mailed to all registered voters in April. Measure C will protect teachers and academic programs in our classrooms if it garners the 67% vote needed for passage. The measure renews existing local funding for our schools that voters approved in 2004. It will cost property owners \$12 per month year for 7 years, paid as a part of their annual property tax.

This measure will help protect critical academic programs, such as math, science and literacy, as well as to help retain qualified and experienced teachers in our classrooms. These funds go directly to our San Ramon Valley Unified schools—the state can't take a dime.

A citizen oversight committee and annual audits will ensure that funds from the measure are spent on voter-approved programs. No funds can be spent on administrators' salaries, and an exemption is available for persons 65 and older, as well as people with disabilities.

Voters will receive a mail-only ballot in early April. Ballots must be returned by April 30 in order to be counted by the Contra Costa Registrar of Voters. You'll be hearing more about the measure in the coming weeks. If you have questions or would like to help, please contact Pine Valley PTA Legislative Advocacy Representatives, Laie Nelson at laienelson@sbcglobal.net and Kristen Holbrook at k10holbrook@hotmail.com or PTA President, Collette Ricks at collettericks@comcast.net.

Counselors' Corner - by Julie Damgen

"Hooray for School Counselors"

- Focus on the whole child
- Improve graduation rates
- Encourage academic preparation
- Advocate for the student

- Connect learning and earning
- Promote positive relationships
- Explain postsecondary options
- Work with parents and guardians
- Connect career development with classroom activities

New Comprehensive Website on Internet

To provide educators, parents and other adults with the tools necessary for helping kids use social technologies in a safe and savvy manner, the National Education Association has developed a comprehensive website, www.bnetsavvy.org. This resource is designed to help educators and parents learn more about the risks and opportunities of technology and to better guide young teens in using social technology and safely navigating their digital world.

www.bnetsavvy.org is a "one-stop shop" for adults. There educators and parents will find internet safety information, classroom activities, news stories, credible links and interactive message boards; articles written by educators, parents, experts, and young people, and a variety of Internet-related activities, tools and resources. Topics will cover the spectrum of social technology from social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook to instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, texting and online gaming. Adults will be provided with insights into the world that kids are entering from computers, gaming units and cell phones. To visit this new website, go to <http://www.bnetsavvy.org/>.

PV Puma Choir Wants You!

If you like to sing or want to learn to sing, this new-for-next-school-year elective class is for you! Students in this class will perform all types of music, classical, jazz, pop and show tunes as part of the Pine Valley Puma Choir. The class will include music theory, correct vocal technique, opportunities for solo work and choreography, and it will be taught by Lucerne Mottaz who is the choral music teacher at Cal High. The Pine Valley Puma Choir will perform twice a year and at the California Music Educators Association Music Festival. Interested? Be sure to sign up for the class during on your Course Selection Sheet, which is due March 20. We need enough sign-ups for this new elective to happen - so tell your friends about it!

Pine Valley PTA Needs You! –PTA Nominating Committee

PTA is a great way to get involved and make a difference at our school. The Pine Valley PTA nominating committee is in the process of filling positions for the next school year. If you are interested in helping out with PTA next year, contact a member of the nominating committee: Beth Beadle, jjbeadle1@yahoo.com, Lori Cade, ibelorbo@hotmail.com, Lisa Chalmers, cycme@pacbell.net, Kristen Holbrook, k10holbrook@hotmail.com, and Lisa Webster, lisawebster@gmail.com. The positions we are still trying to fill are:

- President
- Treasurer
- Registration 2009
- Cookie Dough Liaison
- Hospitality
- Open House BBQ
- Staff Appreciation
- 8th Grade Promotion

We look forward to hearing from you!

Emergency Preparation – by Lisa Webster

We are fortunate at Pine Valley to have a great safety plan in place. We are constantly looking for ways to improve. After last month's Earthquake Drill, we are looking to add the following items to our emergency supplies:

- Blankets
- Plastic bins, tubs, and storage boxes with lids, in many sizes ranging from 12 qt. size up to 80 qt. size, and all sizes in between! (such as Rubbermaid and Sterilite)
- Used/secondhand wheelchairs
- Used backpacks, small (elementary) size preferred
- 2' to 4' crow bars and straight bars

If you would like to donate any of these items, please bring them to the Pine Valley office during regular school hours. Thank you for your help.

Screening Volunteers Needed – by Lisa Webster

Pine Valley's school nurse, Mrs. Gunderson, needs volunteers to help with checking students in and filling out forms for upcoming mandated scoliosis screenings. We are looking for volunteers for the following time slots:

Monday, March 16: 1 volunteer from 8:15 to 11:45am and 1 volunteer from 12:00 to 2:45pm

Tuesday, March 17: 1 volunteer from 8:15 to 11:45am and 1 volunteer from 12:00 to 2:45pm

If you are available please email Lisa Webster at lisawebster@gmail.com with the date and time that works for you. Thank you for helping facilitating this important screening process!

Teacher/Staff Appreciation – by Teresa DeHope

We're planning the next-to-last luncheon of the year and could use some more helpers. The luncheon will be held on Tuesday, March 17 and it will be a St. Patrick's Day theme. It's being held right before conferences and is also intended to be a morale booster as many are feeling the stress of the budget crisis and possibly receiving pink slips. I could use help with decorating the day before, bringing a food item, or ingredients for some of the dishes. I can be contacted at: tdehope@gmail.com Thanks in advance.

Box Tops for Education – by Melinna Gershik

Once again, I wanted to take the time to remind each of our Pine Valley families to keep their eyes open for Box Tops on the products that we all use at home. Hopefully you have been collecting Box Tops and sending them in with your students. To see a current list of products that have Box Tops go to <http://www.boxtops4education.com/AboutBoxTops/Products.aspx>.



In addition to clipping Box Tops, our school can also earn money through the Box Tops for Education Marketplace website portal, <http://www.boxtops4education.com/Marketplace/Default.aspx>. There are many websites -- perhaps ones that you already shop at -- that will make contributions to our school if you use the Marketplace portal.

If you have any questions about the Box Tops for Education program at Pine Valley, please email Melinna Gershik at pinevalleyboxtops@yahoo.com or call 828-9290. Thank you for your support!

Are you an RN ... or a LVN?

The San Ramon Valley Unified School district is currently seeking licensed nurses to fill some on-call, part-time positions. This work involves one-on-one medical care for students. Our nurses need to be independent thinkers with strong assessment skills. Good interpersonal communication skills are a must. To qualify, you must possess a current CA license as an RN or LVN and have a current CPR certificate. To explore this opportunity, contact Kirby Hoy, Student Services at (925) 552-5052.

15th Annual Youth to Youth Middle School Conference

March 14, 2009, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.

At Gale Ranch Middle School

100% NATURAL.....100% YOU....ADD NOTHING!!!

Surely you've heard of YOUTH TO YOUTH....after all, this is the 15th year that high school leaders have been stepping up & out with your 6th, 7th & 8th grade students to help them believe in themselves to do what they love without drugs or alcohol being part of the plan. This is an amazing day and an opportunity for young teens to spend with high school leaders who believe in the strength of being drug, alcohol and tobacco free. But this conference is about so much more than drug and alcohol prevention. It's about leadership, self-confidence and empowering young people to make positive choices that impact their future.

San Ramon Valley Community Against Substance Abuse (CASA) has proudly been celebrating drug free youth in our valley since 1995. The nationwide Youth to Youth (Y2Y) program was established in 1982 as a community-based drug prevention & youth leadership program focusing on middle and high school students. The conference is an entire day where the kids get together, have fun, and talk about some really important issues. Teens with Y2Y training have been working enthusiastically for several months to prepare for the big day. More than 80 of our local high school students will work at the conference, guiding their younger peers through skits, games, panel discussions and small group activities.

More than 20 workshops will be offered throughout the day, such as building self esteem, dance, what to expect in high school, drug & alcohol information and communication skills. The conference will end with a dance. Youth to Youth creates opportunities for teens to support each other in decisions to be drug free and focuses on topics that youth face today. The learning and fun continues from morning till night during a Y2Y conference. If your kids like hanging out with their friends, meeting new friends, having fun, dancing and good food - then this is the conference for them.

Registration forms can be found in the school office or can be downloaded at www.srvcasa.org or www.srvcouncilpta.org.

PV Student wins Student Art Contest Award

We are pleased to announce that 8th grader, Karishma Pareek from Pine Valley received a first place award and an honorable mention award in the 7-8th grade Photography category in the Dublin/San Ramon Women's Club's 17th annual Student Art Contest.

Selected entries will be on display from March 4-25 at either the Dublin Heritage Center at 6600 Donolon Way in Dublin or the San Ramon Community Center at 12501 Alcosta Blvd. in San Ramon. Twenty-eight schools and over four hundred students entered the contest. There are wonderful examples of art from all age groups to view at these two galleries. It is an exciting opportunity to see the talent and range of media used by these young artists.

PV Students Excel in Letters about Literature Contest

- by Mrs. Phillips

Congratulations go out to Reilly Fankhauser (Rowland), Max Kagan (Phillips), Trang Nguyen (Rowland), Andrew Pannu (Lougherty) and Rob Rowenhorst (Rowland) for their accomplishment in the Letters About Literature contest. They were five of the thirty-five (level two) finalists in the state. Originally there were 54,000 entries in all three levels. Rob Rowenhorst has moved along to the top ten in level two. Way to go Rob!

Letters about Literature is a contest open to elementary, middle and high school students. It requires the students to respond to a type of literature, poem, book, or song. The seventh graders wrote Response to Literature letters to authors of books they read during second quarter. If you would like more information you can check the website at <http://www.calbook.org/>.

City of SR Programs for Teens – by Adam Chow

The City of San Ramon Parks & Community Services Department offers a variety of programs and classes. Visit www.SRTeen.org for a complete listing of what's going on for teens in San Ramon. To register for classes or other programs stop by the San Ramon or Dougherty Station Community Centers or you can register online at www.SanRamonRecGuide.com. If you have questions or need more information please call 973-3200.

Teen Centers

The City of San Ramon is pleased at the success of the Teen Centers for students at Pine Valley, Gale Ranch, and Windemere Ranch. The Teen Centers provide supervised and structured academic and recreational activities from after school until 6:00 p.m. every school day. For more information on registration, fees and policies please visit www.SRTeen.org or call Adam Chow at 973-3362. Registration is now open!

Upcoming Events

Middle School Dance (Friday, April 17)

Put on your favorite Hawaiian shirt and shorts for this island themed middle school dance on Friday, April 17th from 6-9 pm at the San Ramon Community Center. All 6th, 7th, and 8th graders with a valid school ID are invited to attend this fun event. Tickets will be sold for \$6 at all middle schools the week of April 13th. Tickets will also be available at our middle school Teen Centers, and San Ramon Community Center beginning March 30th. The last dance sold out so get your tickets early! Dress code will be strictly enforced. A parental permission form is required and can be downloaded at www.SRTeen.org.

Upcoming Trips

Paintball (Saturday, April 25)

Try paintball which is tag, hide & seek and capture the flag all combined in one action packed sport. Feel the adrenaline rush and excitement of playing paintball with or against your friends. This is a great opportunity if you've never played before since we will only be playing against each other. You'll have lots of stories to tell after this unforgettable trip. Includes all equipment necessary, but bring a sack lunch. Cost is \$69 for residents. Visit www.SRTeen.org for more information.

Visit SRTeen.org

Go to San Ramon's Teen website, www.SRTeen.org to get information on teen events, programs, classes, and other programs. Click on the Survey tab and complete our online surveys to be eligible for free prizes such as gift cards to Jamba Juice or Regal Cinema. Check out www.SRTeen.org to get the 411 on teen programs.

Student of the Month – by Shannon Maser & Wendy Pomeroy

Each month Pine Valley Middle School focuses on a life skill, such as caring, organization, effort, and respect. The Student-of-the-Month program recognizes students who exemplify the particular month's life skill. Teachers nominate one student from any of their classes. The students are rewarded with an ice cream sundae or other special treat during their lunch period on the last Friday of the month. A professional photographer takes their pictures, which are sent home in a keepsake folder.

Congratulations to the February Students of the Month who are recognized for exhibiting the life skill of **Friendship**. The featured life skill for March is Sense of Humor.

<u>Student</u>	<u>(Selected by)</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>(Selected by)</u>
Kelsey Aguirre	(Mr. Cooley)	Catherine Kraska	(Mr. Bellomo)
Zoe Alexander	(Ms. Charles)	Brand Kroger	(Mr. Miller)
Emily Anderson	(Mrs. Knudson)	Kyle Lee	(Mrs. Johnston)
Samuel Barish	(Mrs. Nair)	Rebecca Lengyel	(Mrs. Marohn)
Jeremiah Bell	(Miss Martin)	David Loconte	(Miss Gault)
Greg Bretzing	(Mrs. Kontilis)	Sierra Macaluso	(Miss Clarkson)
Laryssa Chan	(Mr. Boyd)	Austin Maciey	(Miss deSilva)
Victoria Chin	(Mr. Cepeda)	Neelam Nandra	(Mrs. Hegarty)
Mariana Costa	(Mrs. Peterson)	Michael Northcraft	(Mrs. White)
Christopher D'Amore	(Miss Krummes)	Esteban Ortiz	(Ms. Huff)
Simone Edwards	(Miss Damgen)	Dvir Reif	(Mrs. Marchese)
Jonathan Feldman	(Mr. Liebow)	Kaitlyn Robinson	(Mrs. Schluntz)
Norman Fenk	(Dr. Grame)	Ian Rogers	(Mrs. Rowland)
Daniel Ford	(Miss Ciriaco)	Zachary Sigl	(Mr. Law)
Leah Fournier	(Mrs Barks)	Raphael Sta Maria	(Miss Pappas)
Jesse Gandt	(Mrs. Irvin)	Nikki Suydam	(Mrs. Svoboda/Gross)
Kayvaan Ghovanloo	(Miss Meredith)	Nicole Thompson	(Ms. Mirando)
Jessica Gilbert	(Mr. Vespi)	Kaili Waters	(Mr. Wulff)
Blake Guardino	(Mr. Munson)	Chase Weaver	(Mrs. Fleshman)
Julia Guesnon	(Mrs. Rosenberg)	Maya White	(Mrs. Locke)
Matthew Hern	(Mrs. Moore)	Lisette White	(Miss Myers)
Kyle Hornsby	(Mr. Erbez)	Hannah Wolf	(Mrs. Shivitz)
Cindy Kanga	(Mrs. Loughery)	Kelly Wright	(Ms. Phillips)

In addition, we recognize **Christian Fahrney** who inadvertently left off the December/January Student of the Month recognition in the February newsletter. Christian was recognized by Mr. Munson for Responsibility.