



Cottonwood Tales



President's Message

By Simone Nelson, PTA President

Hello Los Alamitos Families!

We are off and running with a great start to our school year! I am excited to be serving as our new PTA President for the next two years. This year's PTA theme for Los Alamitos is "Together We Can," and in the eight short weeks since school began, together we have already accomplished great things!

First, we ran a very successful membership drive, led by Jenny Bradanini & Angela McDougal, who signed up almost 650 members! This is an all time high for our school and the highest PTA membership in all of San Jose Unified this year! Also, we held our much loved Walk-a-thon and Silent Auction and it looks as though we will match our earnings from last year (final numbers are still being tallied)! This speaks volumes about our great school community considering the state of our economy right now!

One of the things I enjoy most about being President is seeing all of the people who work so hard on behalf of our children every day. Of course, our wonderful teachers and office staff come to mind immediately.

In addition, there are so many wonderful volunteers who work on behalf of the PTA, including board members, committee chairs and committee members. We have volunteers who edit our newsletter, prune our bushes and tend our gardens, make hundreds of copies each week, volunteer at events, make signs, patrol our blacktop, update our school sign and so many more!!

I have special appreciation for those who step in at a moment's notice when a need arises, and we've needed many of you already this year! It doesn't matter whether your role is big or small or somewhere in between. In the end, we are a team working toward the same goal. We all play an important part in making Los Alamitos the excellent school that it is!

I invite you to join us next Tuesday, Nov. 4th for our general PTA meeting @ 7:00 pm in the media center. Once we finish conducting our usual business, stay with us and enjoy some sparkling cider, water & treats as we celebrate both our membership and fundraising accomplishments this year!

There are many ways for you to stay updated about PTA happenings. We have our website at www.losalamitos.org updated regularly by Francine Simone, our bi-monthly newsletter, Cottonwood Tales (which you are reading!), edited by Monique Guerra, morning announcements and our PTA Board, outside Mrs. Fickett's kindergarten room.

It is not too late to become a "shining star in our galaxy" (membership forms are in the office) or to get involved. Please free to contact me at simonenelson@sbcglobal.net or 408-515-1766 with any questions or suggestions you may have.

Now, that we've gotten so many important things accomplished and/or set-up for the school year, let's get going with the "fun job" of enriching the lives of our children.

Warmly,
Simone

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See our Volunteer Opportunities on Page 4!!

Together We Can!

Principal's Message

By Mrs. Shyril McGuiness

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year. As usual, this year has been a busy and exciting beginning. It's hard to believe, but the school continues to grow. This year we have added a new fourth grade class. Please give a warm welcome to our five new teachers. I am happy to announce Ms. Cerruti, teaching SDC pre-school; Mrs. Hillesland, teaching first grade; Ms. Choi, teaching third grade; Ms. Mlakar, teaching our new fourth grade class; and Mrs. Moore who will be teaching our RSP Program. They are all talented, skilled, and highly qualified teachers.

We started the year with the PTA supporting the school in the wonderful manner they always do. Parents gave their time and talents by volunteering for events such as the Welcome Back to School luncheon, Munch and Movie Night, the Walk-a-thon and Silent Auction, the Computer Lab, Open House, Parent Patrol, Art Vista, assisting in the classroom, and much, much more. These are only some of the events and ways PTA supports the staff and students. PTA also provides the school

with funds for programs such as the Science Lab, our music program, and gives the teachers a start-up budget. PTA is a hard working, impressive and greatly appreciated organization. If you have not already joined PTA, please do so. You can find out how by inquiring in the office, calling the school, or contacting the new PTA president, Mrs. Simone Nelson. She is energetic, and always happy to help.

Regular attendance is important for student success. Students should arrive at school everyday on time (at 8:55), unless they are sick, have a doctor's appointment, or if there is a tragedy in the family. Please keep Independent Contracts to a minimum. They should only be used for emergencies, not for family vacations. Be sure to call the school office, every day your child is not in school.

Lastly, be sure to be alert during drop off and pick up times, use caution, and drive safely. Have you noticed the new traffic sign located at the end of the staff parking lot and the valet driveway? It reads right turn only, no left turn Monday through Friday from 8:30 - 9:30, and from 2:30 -3:30. This was put in place along with some other changes near bus zones for safety reasons. Safety is always a number one priority. So please do not ask your child/ren to run across the middle of the street, and please do not make u-turns in the middle of the street. Thank you for your help in keeping our school safe.

2008 Walk-a-Thon "Walking on the Wild Side" By Lynne Wach & Wendy Walker

WAT Co-Chairs

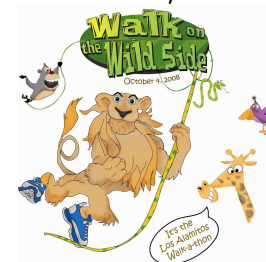
Walking on the Wild Side this year was just that! It was a wild day of walking, music, BBQ'ing, rain, bidding, fun and community! Each year since 1989, we have been holding a one day event to raise money to fund all of the programs we have come to know and love. This year was no different, except for the state of economy is such that we were a little afraid that some things we provide for our kids would have to be sacrificed. Well, we are happy to report that you all came through for our children and we believe it is a true testament to just what kind of a place Los Alamitos Elementary is!

So, THANK YOU to every single person who participated in every small way to make this day a huge success. We had so many volunteers the day of Walk-a-thon, there are too many to name. We would, however, like to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of those who chaired a section of our big day. Thank you to Debbie Michels and Monique Guerra and their families for tak-

ing on the Silent Auction once again, to Phil and Brandy Varni for BBQ'ing up a storm, to our favorite crossing guard, Jan Bokelman for her continued commitment to Fun Foods, to Cathy Angell and her daughter for making sure that we had a fully stocked Dutch Rafle, to Mr. Ford for his brilliant idea of a Wild Game Preserve and fun magic show, to Elena Joroski and crew for creating a wild arch, to Richard and Londa Daley for making sure we had water (even though it wasn't too hot), to Mrs. Merrell for her choreography to the teachers dance that we look forward to each year, to our volunteer coordinators, Barbara Carbone and Alisha Morcate for organizing everyone to be in their places, to Nicole Ison for her wonderful t-shirt design, to Dana Arnold (our new Commissioner), to Bill Herndon for doing a great job of a not fun job, to Dandy Lion and his new pal, Mr. Gorilla for getting us all motivated, to the veteran parents who came back to help make the day a success...Mr. Peter Robinson (DJ), Mr. Don Carlson (lap puncher extraordinaire)

and Mr. (Dancin' Ray) Cruz, to Custodian, Mr. Jim for making sure we have empty trash containers and stocked facilities, to all the ladies in the office for putting up with all of the craziness we go through for 5 weeks in preparation of this day, and to Mrs. McGuiness for all of her support throughout the process! It takes a village and we are fortunate to be a part of this one. This is our last year as parents at Los Alamitos. It is with great sadness that we move on from this terrific event, but know that all of you will make sure that it continues to be a fun-filled day to remember!

~Lynne Wach & Wendy Walker



2008 Silent Auction is a HUGE success!

By Monique Guerra & Debbie Michels
Silent Auction Co-Chairs

Parents, faculty and friends of Los Alamitos showed enthusiastic support at the annual Silent Auction held on October 4th, the same day as the Walk-a-Thon. We had more donations than ever before and some



really creative baskets and items for sale. The most unusual item was a basket of stick bugs with their very own cage and roseplant. Other unique donation items included a behind-the-scenes

evening with the Sharks and a helicopter ride with the San Jose Police Department. Legos, sports memorabilia, restaurant, museum and hotel gift certificates, home décor and spa baskets were a few of the usual favorites. A variety of parties were also a big hit, which give parents a chance to gather outside of school and socialize!

A huge thank you and debt of gratitude to the many volunteers who helped us make the event such a success, including Jenny Bradanini, Reed Canerday, Michelle Dirk, Darlene Franciotti,

Terri Jimenez, Keri Landrum, Shirley and Dan Lee, Patty Liebscher, Grant Michels, Sally Moiseff, Simone Nelson, Lesley Pesek, Liz Guerra, Marnie Rohde, Julie Shaver, Judy Siegel, Jennifer Simmons, Gina Thrower, Michelle Takeuchi, Lynne Wach, Jim and Wendy Walker and Mary Jane Yetkinler. We apologize if we missed anyone!

Thank you to everyone for showing your support both with your time and financially! Together we can make a difference for our children!

PTA Reflections Program

By Desiree Pilarski, Chairperson

The Reflections Program is a National PTA cultural arts program which enables students to express themselves through creative arts based on an annual theme. This year theme is "WOW!". The students may enter their original work into any of the six categories; visual arts, musical composition, photography, literature, dance choreography and film/video.

This year, we have received 52 participations requests and are looking forward to seeing all of the original and creative entries. All entries need to be turned into the office no later than November 4th. These entries will then be locally judged with selected pieces advancing to the district level and may advance to state or national levels. Every participant will be recognized for their hard work and artistic efforts.

Good Luck to everyone and more importantly, have fun creating!

If you have any questions, please email me at jdpilarski@sbcglobal.net.



Box Tops 4 Education

By Lottie Drake, Chairperson

Great job Los Alamitos! So far we have turned in **9,550** box tops! I have made two submissions this year and we will receive our first check on December 15th. Keep those box tops coming!



Don't forget to check out the other ways that you can earn money for our school by going to www.boxtops4education.com.

Happy clipping!

Upcoming Events

By Michelle Takeuchi



LOS ALAMITOS FAMILY FUN NIGHT!

Join us on Thursday November 6th at Una Mas on Blossom Hill Road (Main Street Plaza Next to Starbucks)

30% of sales will be donated to the Los Alamitos PTA and will help fund our music program.

Bring the flyer to insure our school receives credit. Flyers will arrive in the white envelopes and are also posted on the LA Web Site.



LOS ALAMITOS HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE 18 Barrels for 18 Days

To benefit Second Harvest Food Bank

Starting on Monday, November 2nd our school will be assisting the Second Harvest Food Bank in our annual Food Drive. Our goal is to fill 18 barrels!

Look for a flyer in your white envelope !

Los Alamitos Elementary School is proud to help support those in need!

Los Alamitos

6130 Silberman Drive
San Jose, CA 95120

408-653-6297

www.losalamitos.org



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

at Los Alamitos

As the saying goes, "many hands make light work!" If you are interested in volunteering some of your time but not sure where you might be needed, look no further! Here are opportunities currently available:

Lost & Found help needed

Looking for one volunteer per month to help manage the lost and found bins.

Job Description:

Organize and sort the clothing twice a week for your assigned month.

All clothing items with name labels are placed in the teachers boxes in the staff room.

All unlabeled items remain in bins sorted by type (coats, hooded, sweaters/sweatshirts).

Keep plastic bin lids closed when possible (especially in rainy season).

Please let me know if you are interested in helping with the 'growing' Lost & Found bins. I will assist the volunteer each month and show you everything you need to know.

Thank you,

Angie Rosenbaum

angiern@comcast.net

c218-6838

Los Alamitos Shining Stars!

We are excited to announce our new "Shining Stars" section in The Cottonwood Tales this year. In this section, we want to recognize those volunteers who have stepped in at a moment's notice, taken on extra duties or gone above & beyond the call of duty!

Dan DiNaro - PTA "Thank You" Keychains

Rinku & Sandip Bhattacharya - Membership/Directory

Kerry Vogel - Hospitality

Michelle Takeuchi - Family Nights

Pete Muraco - Red Ribbon Week

Marie Smoke - Photocopying

Jenny Bradanini—Wishing Tree

Laura Raimondi—Kindergarten Photos

Terri Jimenez— PTA Sign & Bulletin Board and Kindergarten Photos

Marybeth Torpey—Kindergarten DVD



HAVE A SAFE AND FUN HALLOWEEN!

