

Why Do You Give? Pacific Primary's Annual Fund

By Lynda Sanjurjo-Rutter

"We continue to support Pacific Primary because we love the school and really believe in its mission and leadership. The school continues to be a rare example of diversity, acceptance, kindness, and community that we have not encountered anywhere else."

—June Lee
Parent of Alumni Micah '08,
Kiki '06, and Zachary '03

"Donating to Pacific Primary's Annual Fund is a small, but important way to give a bright grandchild a good start in an outstanding school."

—Diane and Tom MacKenzie
Gray Whale Grandparents ('09-10)

Money alone cannot make a preschool great, but a great preschool cannot serve children and their families effectively without the generous support of parents, grandparents, friends and alumni. After 35 years, Pacific Primary is proud of its efforts to change the world, one child at a time. The Annual Fund helps to underwrite every element of the experience, including our tuition assistance program and creative arts program and specialists. Gifts at every level are very much appreciated and every one counts.

Pacific Primary now has two schools, and both schools offer an exceptional and nurturing learning environment filled with play and hands-on experiences. Our extraordinary teachers and vibrant curriculum provide children with creative problem-solving skills, a love of difference and celebration of diversity, and an astonishing confidence to

connect meaningfully with the people and communities around them.

Pacific Primary inspires a lifelong love of learning, creating and caring and many in our community give to the Annual Fund in celebration of their Pacific Primary experience.

Why do you give? We want to hear from you. Write or send an email to:

Belann Giarretto, Director
Pacific Primary
1501 Grove Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

belann@pacificprimary.org

Please make the subject line of your email:

Why I Give

Alumni Notes

By Tita Bell

Alexis Bogardus (1986) graduated from the California Culinary Academy, worked as a pastry chef at Slanted Door, and now works part-time at the Sandbox Bakery on Cortland. She recently brought her 18-month-old daughter Saoirse to Pacific Primary to see her former teacher Roxie!

Jonathan Hunt (1996) is in his final year at The Bay School of San Francisco. He has been a summer assistant at Pacific Primary for the past four years and recently completed a seven-month internship at Pirate Cat Radio 87.9 FM, which ignited his passion for radio. The highlight was having his own radio show that featured young performers and musicians in the Bay Area. He is an avid electric guitarist.

David O'Donnell (1978) has lived in Chicago since graduating from Northwestern University in 1993. For years he worked in the theater, primarily as a puppeteer and puppet festival producer. Simultaneously, he worked as a product design and business consultant. In 2003 David obtained a master's degree in urban planning and worked on energy efficiency and renewable energy policy for the City of Chicago. David is now exploring independent opportunities in the energy efficiency fields and still lives in Chicago with his wife, Jessica, and their daughter, Willa Marie.

Tobin O'Donnell (1979) is a freelance copywriter and brand strategist, but still wishes he could work in a sandbox because he feels he did some of his best work in the sandboxes of his youth. His parents, Kris and Owen O'Donnell, were among the founding families of Pacific Primary. His mother, Kris, still volunteers at Pacific Primary, which Tobin thinks is wonderful.

Gabriella Fracchia Archini (1982) is still good friends with many of her Pacific Primary grads. She lives in San Francisco with her husband Christopher. Gabriella works in real estate and savors all that this great city has to offer.

Alex Hedgpeth (1995) is a student at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, where she won a partial scholarship and placed into the honors science program. Alex is majoring in environmental studies.

Marisa Hedgpeth (1998) is in her sophomore year at Drew High School and is a staunch advocate for marriage equality. She was active in the 2008 campaign against Prop 8.

Corrinne Schneider (1988) graduated from USF and is now getting her Masters of Science in Athletic Training at Montana State University at Billings.



the PACIFIC PRIMARY SUN

WWW.PACIFICPRIMARY.ORG

WINTER 2009-2010



Pacific Terrific: The One and Only Pacific Primary

By Diana Kapp

Magical art drawers. Gobs of colored tape. A Ramp Project that begins in November and doesn't end until May, sprawling through every hallway, encompassing physics, art, math, and engineering. Hot buttered toast every morning (organic whole wheat, no transfats!). The Peace Place, where conflicts are resolved. Children marching around the block to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, singing "We Shall Overcome." These are just some of the images that spring to mind when someone asks, 'What makes Pacific Primary so unique?'

What Pacific Primary parent hasn't had their child clamor for colored tape? Who hasn't had their child come home covered in wads of tape or with amazing objects made of nothing other than empty paper towel rolls and tape? How amazing it is that our kids' daily art projects are dreamed up and executed entirely by them, with little instruction, no lines to fill in, or recommended materials. The openness, freedom and creativity of these art projects is utterly organic and wouldn't be possible without the school's dedicated art teachers.

As Pacific Primary enters its 35th year, there is little doubt that the list of our school's compellingly unique attributes couldn't be contained within this newsletter. For Director Belann Giarretto, what makes our school so special, is the amazing staff and their dedication, passion, and willingness to experiment as they develop the best methods possible for teaching our kids how to learn. Not only are the staff empowered to take continuing education classes, teachers get help from a support teacher three hours a week, giving them significant time to reflect and observe the children's curiosities and interests. This is what makes possible the

emergent curriculum that is Pacific Primary's trademark, that has resulted in endlessly inventive projects that have incorporated everything from buildings and maps to babies and the Golden Gate Bridge! Parents love that Pacific Primary's daily schedule—open year-round from 7:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.—provides flexibility, and that there is no stigma around early drop-off and



The Pandas build a tower using Magnatiles.

late pick-ups. (We also know that quite often our kids don't want to leave!) Our children also rave about enriching out-of-town summer bus field trips designed to complement the school's emergent curriculum—berry picking anyone?—and the fact that parents are always encouraged to stop by and read a book, do a cooking project, or chaperone a field trip.

Continued on page 10

PACIFIC PRIMARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2009-2010

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Megan Stermer

Penguins
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Prairie Dogs
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Polar Bears
Merrill Buice
Blaire Hansen

Celebrating Parents

A message from Board President Colleen von Eckartsberg

You've just read some great articles about the fabulous teachers and programs we love at Pacific Primary. We all know how much our children thrive here and alums know how well this school prepared their kids for the challenges of years ahead. And we all know how lucky we are to have been part of this experience.

I'd like to celebrate parents. One of the most striking things about Pacific Primary is the sheer amount of work performed by hundreds of busy parents. Not just showing up at meetings, but pouring incredible amounts of talent, skill, love, commitment and dedication into every kind of task. My direct knowledge is with the Pacific Primary Board. It is the hardest working board of any I have experienced. And yet every day I also hear about dozens of other ridiculously hard-working parents who are putting together the auction, looking after the gardens, repairing our old building, creating financial models, making films about our experience, creating an entire development plan, organizing an event, managing classroom volunteers, planning our newsletter, designing t-shirts, and more. It's astonishing.

We do all this because it has an enormous impact. As a school, we try hard to keep tuition affordable and to pass as much of our income to teachers as we can. That leaves a lot to be done by volunteers.

But the really great thing about all the work parents do is that it creates a community and the opportunity to bond with other families. In fact, these bonds are so strong, that we constantly hear stories where families continue their close friendships well after their children leave Pacific Primary to attend different schools. We make new friends; we experience the joy of accomplishing something really great together; we know more faces when we



come into the school; we have more shared experiences. We are unlikely to be asked, or allowed, to participate in another school in quite the way we are with Pacific Primary. I know that, at times, it's a time pressure, but it's also the thing that makes us feel so connected to the place.

So a huge thank you to all of the parents who have made Pacific Primary a better experience for my family. Some of you stayed up all night typing info sheets for the silent auction, some of you spent your weekend replacing a scary old janitor's closet and sink, many of you spent hours making signs, selling t-shirts, entering data for auction donations and some of you spent your weekends and mornings sorting through hundreds of photos for this newsletter. Each of these adds up to a vibrant, fun, energetic, and passionate place for our children and for each of us to be part of every day. It would not be the same without all of these contributions.

Thank You.

Colleen is a Coyote mom and soon-to-be Sandpiper mom.

A beautiful new Pacific Primary website was created by Boone Spooner in the fall of 2009:

www.pacificprimary.org

The new website has info on both schools, admissions, a newsletter archive, a way to donate, and much more!

THANK YOU, BOONE, FOR ALL OF YOUR EFFORTS!



Reflections: Why Pacific Primary is Unique

By Tita Bell

Ivy Fine (Alum Mom)
Joshua, 2008

One of the most unique aspects of Pacific Primary is the mix of families at the school and within each class. Belann has drawn together extraordinarily diverse groups of families who, despite their different backgrounds, are able to find common ground and develop lasting bonds that continue well beyond the preschool years. Joshua remains good friends with some of his Pacific Primary classmates and the families continue to stay connected and support each other in matters relating to their children's education.

Charo Gonzalez (Alum and current Mom)
Nico, 2005; Lucia and Marco, Sandpipers

Two Pacific Primary traditions distinguish the school and have left an indelible impression on my older son, Nico: the Peace Place and the Peace Parade. As a kindergartener at Stuart Hall, Nico suggested the idea of the Peace Place when a conflict arose between some of his classmates. The teacher liked the idea so much that the Peace Place was adopted as a conflict resolution method for the class that year. Even now, as part of the fourth grade's Black History Month lesson, Nico shared with his class how he learned in preschool that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a role model and leader. Nico has fond memories of the Peace Parade and plans to incorporate it into his Black History Month project.

Gina and Michael Warren (Alum and Current Parents)
Christina, 2004; Donovan, 2006; Drake, Coyote

Many things make Pacific Primary unique. For one, there is the "diversity in all its meanings" including "diversity of thought, politics, and parenting styles." The school promotes "an intense and organic understanding of why that diversity is important to each and every child and family." Values and habits are "not so much taught as infused or absorbed over time." The teachers are as attuned to the children's needs as their own parents would be. And the environment is one that [every parent] would create at home if they had the resources and time. Above all, the school's focus on teaching children how to treat people, gives the children everything they need to be 100% prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

Joel Hedgpeth (Alum Dad)
Ben, 1979; Alex, 1995; Marisa, 1998

In the early years, Pacific Primary stood out as a school that was stable, and had patient and knowledgeable teachers who "really focused on the kids." The children were offered a breadth of learning experiences and "were made to feel like they can do things." They developed a sense of responsibility for the school and their class.

Daria Saraf, 1978 (Alum Student and Current Mom)
Shaia, Coyote; Aja, Sandpiper

"In my day, there was a palpable Buddhist influence" at the school which emphasized consequences for one's actions and the administration of those consequences in a non-discriminatory and consistent manner. This influence remains a hallmark of the school, and still manifests today – for example the kindness chain. These lessons in fairness are "age-appropriate and life-appropriate" because even though the world beyond Pacific Primary may not be as kind or impartial, the early lessons serve as "an inspirational foundation for what to strive for and how good it feels when love and rules are administered equally."

Chantel Walker and Anna Yee (Alum Moms)
Aidan, 2008

Due in large part to the fantastic preparation at Pacific Primary, our son's transition to kindergarten and grade school was seamless. We always received fabulous child-development information and advice that still resonates with us today. Aidan has made some lifelong friends – he still plays on a soccer team with his Pacific Primary friends although they now attend four different schools. "Where else can you get such a collection of committed, caring, and intelligent teachers and staff? And where could you find another Belann? This is a school that neither children nor parents want to leave!"



Rainbow Dolphins busy drawing during art class.



Sandpiper teacher, Sarah Watkins, reads to Sandpipers and Coyotes in the Yellow Sun School play yard.



Prairie Dogs jamming away during Music class.

Pacific Terrific

continued from page 1



A month-long investigation of sea life in the Panda class spurred the creation of toothpick sea urchins and a summer field trip to Crab Cove, Alameda.



The Rainbow Dolphins look intently at a jar of caterpillars collected from the garden.




Gray Whales make glitter playdough, inspired by one of the students as part of a project to explore materials using their hands.

Our school is proud to be known for its forward-thinking leadership. And we lead by example. Most of our supplies are recycled and “found” materials. The Orange Sun School is fully solar. Kids compost (and teach their parents.) Regarding food: local and organic is our motto. Diversity is real and treasured. We openly discuss awkwardness that may arise due to economic differences; celebrate racial, ethnic and family diversity, and also invite the sharing of our vast range of cultural traditions. While many schools have a “barbell problem”—families at the low and high end of the income spec-


trum—our school has an amazing mix that truly reflects its commitment to diversity.

Over the past 35 years, Pacific Primary’s core values have remained true to its founding families. They have been kept alive by passionate alumni and parents and staff longevity. (Some have been here for over 30 years!) And they will undoubtedly shape the school—and another generation of children—over the next 35 years. As many parents say: I hope my kids stay in SF so that their kids can go to Pacific Primary!

Weekly Journal - Sandpiper Class 2009
Making *Ayebe* with Hanna!



Out-of-the-box creativity by the Coyotes...



And in-the-box play by the Penguins.

This week the Sandpipers made traditional Ethiopian cheese called *Ayebe* with teacher Hanna. The children watched as the Buttermilk cooked and then was strained to make the cheese! At lunch time many of us tried the cheese and liked it! The next day Mahrushka was reading: *To Be a Kid*, a story about children all over the world. When we read about children in Ethiopia Finn announced: “We know about Ethiopia, like Ethiopian cheese!”

This project had many positive attributes...

- The children learned something about Hanna’s homeland.
- This was a true science project as the children saw the buttermilk literally transform!
- After trying many different cheeses last week, Hanna went one step further by showing the children how she makes cheese at home!

A Message From the Directors

35 years ago, in September 1974, Pacific Primary opened its doors! Nine families helped create a school that has always put the needs of children first. 35 years later, two of our founders are still connected to the school. Roxie Jones is still teaching and bringing her great love of children to all of the classrooms at the Yellow Sun School as our Support Teacher. How fortunate we are to have Roxie! Alums visit the school and are thrilled to see a teacher who still remembers them. Kris O’Donnell, another founder, volunteers every Wednesday with the youngest classroom, the Penguins, at the Orange Sun School and is also a substitute teacher. We are very grateful to the founders and Mary Bodo, Founding Director, for taking the extraordinary steps of opening the school. We thank the O’Donnell, Jones and Twist families for encouraging our board to take the steps and handle the risks in opening a new school. After the start of our second year as two schools, we are delighted to say that it feels like both schools have always anchored the corners of Grove and Baker. To offer the Pacific Primary experience to 75 additional children and their families is a joy.

Every generation of graduates has fond and powerful memories of the school. Many older graduates tell us that Pacific Primary is the best educational experience of their life. We are grateful for the work of Mary Bodo and second Director, Charlotte Burchard, for shepherding the school to new heights.

In early 2010, we will soon be a “Preschool for All” site. We were invited to be part of this program last year and we successfully completed the ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) assessment in October, 2009. The evaluation for all 8 classrooms determined that Pacific Primary is an exemplary school. PFA benefits include a discount in tuition for parents of four-year-olds, funds for the school, staff development and teachers.

We are also very excited to announce that in 2010 Pacific Primary will be starting a two-year pilot Sensory Integration Program made possible by a generous grant from an anonymous donor and from the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund. The goal of this program is to provide support for the children in the Pre-K classrooms and education for parents, as well as the teachers. This is often a



topic that parents and teachers may have an awareness of, but are not always confident in knowing what to do when a child has sensory integration issues.

Some of the components of this program will be assessing the current materials in the classrooms, in order to meet the needs of the children through tactile, movement, visual and auditory areas of their development. We will also have Occupational Therapists, in conjunction with the classroom teachers, to assess those children who are eligible for kindergarten and to determine if there are sensory motor issues before they graduate from Pacific Primary. Then we can decide how we can best support them.

Another important aspect of the program will be professional development for the teachers as well as parent education workshops. The workshops and staff trainings will be conducted by early childhood educators that have specialized in Sensory Motor Development and Brain Development.

All of these opportunities will enhance our program on a continuing basis for our children, parents and staff as we strive to provide the very best program for our community.

With Love and Gratitude,

Belann Giarretto, *Executive Director*

Lynn Turner, *Associate Director*

PACIFIC PRIMARY STAFF
2009-2010
Director
Belann Giarretto

Associate Director
Lynn Turner

Finance Director
Amie Haiz

Administrative Assistant
Elizabeth Cacal

YELLOW SUN SCHOOL

SANDPIPERS
Eric Wilson, *Acting Lead Teacher*
Sarah Watkins
Hanna Alenayehu

GRAY WHALES
Nadia Jaboneta, *Lead Teacher*
Anna Vongvixay
Ida Ahmadpour
Kate Long, *Afternoon Teacher*

RAINBOW DOLPHINS
Lori Ann Spooner, *Lead Teacher*
Darby Hillyard
Bianca Di Palma

COYOTES
Tony Torres, *Lead Teacher*
Neil Aaron
Jamie Solomon

Music and Movement Specialist
Melodi Dalton

Expressive Arts Specialist
Rebecca Magill

Support Teacher
Roxie Jones

Sunroom Coordinator
Erica Mills

Afternoon Sunroom Teacher
Nancy Anderman

Afternoon Supervisor
Rebecca Lewis

Chef
Betty McMillian

**On Sabbatical*
Mahroushka Papazian, *Lead Teacher*

**returns March 2010*

Giving to Haiti

By Vanessa Maren

The Pacific Primary parent and staff community showed an amazing outpouring of generosity recently. It started with Sandpiper parent, Charo Gonzalez, whose friend (a parent at Sacred Heart School) received approval to load a plane full of supplies for the Haitian people. Within 30 hours of an email from Belann requesting supplies for Haiti, both school sunrooms were packed with suitcases and boxes of medical supplies, personal items and clothing. A hair salon owner even donated \$1,000 worth of shampoo!

The drop-off to Haiti was arranged by Sirona Cares –a San Francisco nonprofit organization established in 2009 to build sustainable communities in developing countries. Following the devastating earthquake, Executive Director Michelle Lacourciere, worked through frantic NGO messages and media calls and got right into the business of Haiti relief. After three days of collection, a 1000 square feet warehouse supplied by Nancy Pelosi was packed from floor to ceiling with contributions from the entire Bay Area (including Pacific Primary).

Thank you, Charo, for your initiative in arranging this and giving Pacific Primary



Boxes and packages headed for Haiti, filled the Orange Sun School Sunroom.

families an opportunity to contribute to Haiti relief efforts!

In the coming weeks, Sirona Cares will be coordinating a larger food drive with the San Francisco Restaurant Association. For those who would like to donate further or volunteer your time sorting through items, please visit <http://www.sironacares.org> or e-mail volunteersirona@gmail.com

Financial Highlights

In fiscal year 2009-2010, Pacific Primary anticipates total revenues of \$2,870,120. Tuition and fees account for 89% (or \$2,551,412) of that total.

The 2009 annual auction raised \$130,000.

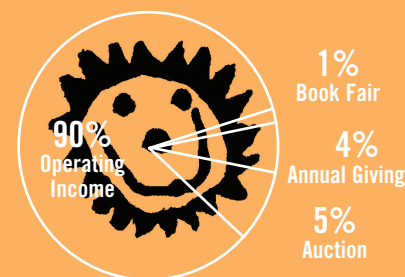
Staff payroll costs comprise 82% of the \$2,832,408 in projected annual expenses for the 2009- 2010 school year.

In 2009- 2010 Pacific Primary has 46 staff members.

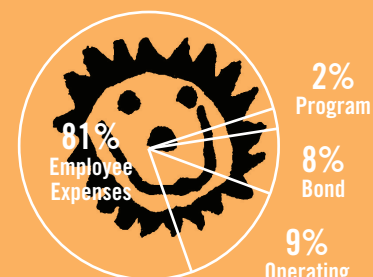
The Tuition Assistance Endowment Fund currently is over \$860,000. Investment income from this fund pays a portion of our tuition assistance fund each year.

This year, 17% of students received tuition assistance, totaling \$192,208.

School Income (2009/2010)



School Expenses (2009/2010)



Celebrating Roxie Jones!

By Laura Gustafson



Roxie Jones has been an active member of the Pacific Primary community since day one, serving in innumerable capacities – founder, parent, volunteer, substitute teacher, support teacher, full-time teacher, keeper of historical knowledge. In her 30+ years with the school, she has seen it all! Roxie recounts a few highlights from her time at the school:

What's your favorite classroom activity?

When I was a full-time classroom teacher, one of my favorite activities was a Bread Project. Each child would bring in a different type of bread to share, from all different countries. We would celebrate the end of the Project by going to Fisherman's Wharf, on the cable cars, to eat crab and sourdough bread.

And favorite outdoor play activity?

I remember our first Skate Day, back in April 1994. We cleared the cement, played music and the children were roller skating all around. It was so much fun!

What has been your most memorable field trip?

There are so many! I remember taking the children out on Stow Lake in paddle boats. I remember when we went by ferry to Angel Island and hiked with the children from one side of the island to the other. I remember

taking the children to the Emporium downtown; we taught the children how to ride the escalators and during the holidays the children had so much fun playing with the Lego display on the top floor.

Do you remember any pets that Pacific Primary has had?

Oh, yes! The first chicken we had at the school was named Heart. We raised her in an incubator until she was fully grown and she eventually laid eggs. She was a sweetheart. The chicken that came to school after Heart was very rambunctious -- she used to race me to the kitchen when Betty was cooking.

What is the biggest change you have seen at the school?

The opening of the Orange Sun School. It's great!

What has been your favorite memory during your time at Pacific Primary?

In 1986, when I was the full-time Rainbow Dolphin teacher, a child asked me at circle time how many children I had and I answered that I had one (daughter, Paulette); the child stopped me and said "No, Roxie, you have 23! We are all your kids!" I will never forget that.

What do you enjoy most about Pacific Primary?

The children. Definitely the children. And the staff. And the field trips.



Roxie Jones and her creative artists.

THE PACIFIC PRIMARY SUN NEWSLETTER CREDITS

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This newsletter is published annually by parents, teachers and friends of Pacific Primary.



Celebrating Chef Betty's 30 Years

By Vanessa Maren

Betty McMillian has been Pacific Primary's chef extraordinaire for 30 years. She takes tremendous joy in cooking delicious, organic meals for the children at the Yellow Sun School. When speaking to Betty, there are two things that are instantly obvious: her incredible warmth and her strong sense of responsibility. Photos of kids with allergies on the fridge door help to avoid any mistakes. And she has a strict no-kids-in-the-kitchen rule, no matter how much the children beg to learn how to cook. While preparing vegetable soup and corn bread for lunch, here's what Betty had to say:

CHEF BETTY'S MACARONI AND CHEESE

There's no one at Pacific Primary who doesn't love Betty's Macaroni and Cheese (even our older alumnis fondly remember this). She makes this dish once a week (always accompanied by either broccoli or string beans), and the kids insist, "Betty makes it best!" Here's her secret:

1 tsp. salt
2 Tbs. heart healthy margarine
1 tsp. oil
3 cup milk
3/4 lb. mild cheddar cheese, grated
1 Tbs. flour
1 lb. elbow macaroni
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Add salt and oil in boiling water. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cook macaroni according to instructions and drain. Add all the other ingredients to the hot macaroni and mix. Pour into baking dish and bake for 30-35 minutes. Serve with green vegetable.

How did you come to work at Pacific Primary?

I used to live around the corner at Grove and Broderick, and I would walk past Pacific Primary to drop my daughter off at elementary school. I love to cook, enjoy being with young kids, and joined Pacific Primary, in 1979, as the substitute of then-chef, Ritha Green. When Ritha left in 1980, then-director Mary Bodo pleaded with me to head up the kitchen. I accepted, and faced the challenge of estimating how much food to prepare for 80 children! I just did it by trial and error, and by setting the kitchen clock well ahead of the

actual time—and it's still running 15 minutes ahead of time today.

What has kept you at Pacific Primary?

Coming to work feels like being at home with your second family. Even with all the growth over the years, the school has kept true to its home-like feel. There are strong bonds amongst the staff and parents. We have been very blessed to have such great directors and they set a good example for the rest of the school.

Why do you enjoy cooking for children? After all, they're picky eaters!

It's important to me that children eat healthy and enjoy what they eat. The kids are so honest, and they will tell me when they don't like something. There is a green vegetable with every meal, and salad is served two to three times a week. We almost never have leftovers. Take note parents: broccoli and salad get wiped out!

What are some special moments that come to mind?

My most special moment is when kids introduce me to their parents. They'll say, "That's Betty, and she's a good cooker!" It also means a lot to me when the kids pop their heads into the doorway and tell me how much they enjoyed their lunch.

What are some of your hobbies?

I love to watch movies and read a wide variety of magazines.

Who cooks at home?

My husband, who is a retired naval officer, fixes my breakfast when I get up at 5am. He also cooks our dinner all by himself.

What's your favorite thing about your job?

The children! I even miss them when I go on summer vacation. My kitchen window looks out onto the playground, and it's inspiring to cook while watching the children play.

Our Strong Commitment to LGBT Families

By Brian Silveira

Pacific Primary's mission reflects its commitment to all families, including lesbian and gay parents. But how does a school like Pacific Primary fulfill this promise?

We begin by striving to mirror San Francisco's diversity in our staff and families. For staff, it means being encouraged, under Belann's leadership, to cultivate the ability to both appreciate our process and goals and to critique and change practices that are not aligned with the complexities of an ever-changing world. These efforts have enabled us to evolve from being a school that merely welcomes all families, to one that is a national model of how to create a welcoming environment for LGBT parents.



A Pacific Primary student enjoying the 2009 San Francisco LGBT Pride Parade with his moms.

In 2002, in recognition of our accomplishments, the Haas, Jr. Fund asked us to work with seven local nonprofit agencies to develop what became the LGBT Early Childhood Education (ECE) Initiative. Belann and I served for five years on the Initiative's steering committee (which I co-chaired), and helped develop the first-in-the-nation college course to teach aspiring educators how to create welcoming environments for LGBT families. This class continues to be taught at City College of San Francisco today. The Initiative also developed a training model that was implemented in many San Francisco ECE programs, and a checklist for parents and teachers to assess their program's inclusivity.

In conjunction with this effort, Jim Pohl, an alum parent, created a documentary called, "Real Families," which includes several Pacific Primary lesbian and gay parents. Belann and I presented the film at the 2005 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference, to more than 60 workshop participants. Attendees ranged from the staff of a faith-based program that was about to welcome its first two-mom family, to a progressive

preschool that wanted to learn how to strengthen its already inclusive program. It was immediately evident that the participants were excited to learn about this topic and eager to meet people who could offer information, support, and advice. Today, I continue to present annually at NAEYC and other conferences on topics ranging from introducing books that include gay and lesbian parents into the classroom, to supporting LGBT staff.

The work that Pacific Primary does within the field of ECE to help schools establish a welcoming environment for LGBT parents and their children is just one aspect of our commitment to social justice. But it is a great source of pride and satisfaction for me, personally, and for our community.

Brian Silveira is Pacific Primary's Polar Bear Lead Teacher, Senior Lead Teacher, and Diversity Coordinator. He received the 2009 David Givens Award from the NAEYC LGBT Interest Forum for his outstanding work as a teacher, leader, and change agent.

PACIFIC PRIMARY STAFF

ORANGE SUN SCHOOL

PENGUINS

Saeda Fuller, *Lead Teacher*
Brandie Braxton
Jarrod Fischer

PRAIRIE DOGS

Jocelyn Halili, *Lead Teacher*
Roxanne Latif
Tammy Barchas
Patricia Phillips, *Afternoon Teacher*

PANDAS

Kelly Fox, *Lead Teacher*
(on maternity leave)
Veronica Lee
Kali Polk-Matthews
Kathleen Hernandez

POLAR BEARS

Brian Silveira, *Lead Teacher*
Alyssa Chazen-Richards
Megan Matteoni

Music and Movement Specialist
Kevin Gerzevitz

Expressive Arts Specialist
Elyse Jacobs

Support Teacher/Afternoon Teacher
Sean O'Connor

Sunroom Coordinator
Joan Vigliotta

Afternoon Sunroom Teacher
Kathleen Hernandez (Sept.-Dec.)

Afternoon Supervisor
Rebecca Walsh

Chef
Donald Meints

Permanent Substitute
Amy Fernandez