

The Pacific Primary Sun



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WINTER 2011-2012

Emergent Curriculum: Why it matters for life-long learning

By Ileana Street



"Education is not the filling of the pail, but the lighting of the fire." – William Butler Yeats

As parents, we care deeply about what our children are learning, yet often find ourselves somewhat mystified by the process. I've caught my husband drilling our daughter on numbers in the bathtub with mixed success and I confess I try to capitalize on her inner genius at all times. While I'm confident that our daughter is learning from us for better or worse, I have witnessed incredible growth in just three months of her attending Pacific Primary, which I can only attribute to the school. How do they do it and what can we, as parents, learn?

Part of the special sauce used at Pacific Primary is the practice of Emergent Curriculum. This is a philosophy by which educators spend time observing children in order to discover the children's interests and inquiries. The curriculum, often in the form of projects, is then developed based on the

children's interests. It "emerges" from the children, in a manner of speaking.

What does this look like in practice? In an example from the Rainbow Dolphin classroom, teachers noticed the children showing interest in the insects and spiders they were finding in the garden. The teachers followed up by asking the children what they knew about spiders and insects during circle time; they taught the children songs and finger plays with factual information on insects; they set up science experiments to learn about venom; they took the children into the garden to explore with magnifying glasses and bug catchers. Teaching in this way supported the children's learning of science and mathematical concepts, among other things. For example, counting and comparing the numbers of legs and antennae, and learning about and noticing symmetry in insect bodies.

Why does this type of teaching matter?
Laura Galvin, now retired, one of the staff
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This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of: Djuna Westcott-Lahar

With deepest sorrow, we extend our sympathy and love to the Westcott-Lahar family at the passing of their daughter, Djuna Westcott-Lahar, a 1996 graduate of Pacific Primary. Djuna passed away in July, 2011 at age 20. Djuna attended Scripps College. Djuna's father, David Lahar is a former Pacific Primary Board President and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee responsible for building our second site, the Orange Sun School. David Lahar and Julie Westcott's youngest daughter, Livia, graduated from Pacific Primary in 1999.



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This Newsletter is written and produced annually by current parents of Pacific Primary, under the guidance of the school's directors. We are deeply grateful to the following parents and staff for their hard work and contribution to the Newsletter:

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A message from the Board President

Hassan Zaidi



Pacific Primary is a place where we leave our most precious possessions for the better part of the day. We walk through the doors knowing full well that our child will be cared for, nurtured and, above all, safely ensconced in an incredible learning environment. It is amazing how many Pacific Primary alum children go on to enrich their elementary school environments with their empathy, problem-solving skills and sense of community.

You have already read about our emphasis on Emergent Curriculum. I did not know what it meant until we came to Pacific Primary as new parents. It seems so obvious an idea to have a whole learning experience with the child being an equal participant with the adult in the classroom, and yet it is not practiced universally or executed well at most schools. Pacific Primary is lucky to have the incredible leadership who recognized the need for this teaching approach and a dedicated, talented teaching staff that

makes it happen. Our children are able to explore the furthest limits of their abilities through the Emergent Curriculum classroom in Pacific Primary, giving them skills that will last a lifetime.

We all know why we love this place – I don't have to list the reasons. However, let me remind you of what Pacific Primary means to our children and, more importantly, to us as parents. It is a place where our offspring learn the values of diversity, community and kindness. It is where we learn to be better parents and better world citizens.

We are so very fortunate to be part of this community. We see it in action through the committed volunteers who participate in our coffee talks, T-shirt sales, book fair, community events, and the all-important annual auction. Thank you to all of our wonderful parents and alums who make this possible.

I would like to now take the time to thank the amazing, hard-working teaching staff. They are incredibly committed, creative and caring. It is interesting that the only place I see the slogan "no child left behind" actually in action and working, is Pacific Primary. It is so gratifying to know that we belong to a community where all of the parts come together in such an amazing fashion. Thank you. Hassan Zaidi.

Emergent Curriculum: Why it matters for life-long learning

Continued from Page 1

who helped bring Emergent Curriculum to Pacific Primary states, "A child who learns through the Emergent Curriculum approach learns to love learning because it is more fun to learn in an area of personal interest." A love of learning is crucial to successfully achieving any goal or navigating challenges in school or life. Children also develop self-confidence since they are given the opportunity to help shape the learning experience. This helps a child feel powerful in a very positive way. A child who is a confident learner is typically more comfortable expressing his/her own ideas, better able to articulate them, and possesses the persistence and drive to figure out new things.

Since this approach seems a lot more inspired than flashcards while bathing, I asked how we, as parents, can support this

type of learning at home. Teachers suggest that parents spend time observing their children's play. Pictures they draw or games they play can illuminate topics to start exploring. More importantly, instead of cleverly answering our children's questions, we should help them discover the answer – visit the library to find books on a topic, or find an expert to ask. Says Jamie Solomon, the Rainbow Dolphin Lead Teacher, "It's much more meaningful for adults to answer their children's questions with 'What makes you think that?' rather than immediately giving an answer."

The result of this approach is that children learn to be curious, independent, and resourceful. In other words, they learn how to be good learners. There is no better foundation to give our kids, than to ignite their passion for learning. Thank you, Pacific Primary!

A message from the Directors



Belann's experience in bringing Emergent Curriculum to Pacific Primary:

A huge shift in our educational philosophy happened at a national conference of Early Childhood Educators in 2001. We were inspired by a presentation on Emergent Curriculum. Like many new ideas, it proved to be controversial at first and took us years to train, inspire, motivate and encourage teachers to accept a new way of developing a love of learning. We always had great teachers, who lovingly provided curriculum that was tried, true and creative, yet mostly teacher-driven. Teachers would pick a theme, transform a classroom, and replicate these same experiences year after year. To ask teachers to look at planning curriculum in a new way was challenging. We had to create a new position, Support Teacher, to give teachers time to observe the children and discover common interests. The teachers had to learn along with the children and found they were doing more work, not less. It has taken us years to learn this new way and we are still learning, still inspiring each other with new interpretations of what it means to create fresh, new curriculum around ideas that are inspired by children's or teachers' interests.

Documentation through Weekly Journals and panels makes the learning visible to our community. When you walk into a classroom and see teachers and children excited by learning, you know you have found the right combination!

Teachers are given time to meet and plan. They make webs that tie the project to all areas of the curriculum, including hands-on math, literacy, music, movement, art, science and cooking. One year at Halloween, many of the Rainbow Dolphins were both fascinated and frightened by skeletons. The teachers "provoked" the interest by bringing in appropriate books about bones. When they saw the children's reaction, they knew that they had the making of a great project. The Bone

Project resulted in a field trip to the pet hospital to see pets getting casts, an expert (a parent doctor) visiting the classroom with human x-rays and teaching the children to make their own casts, dissecting owl pellets and finding the tiny bones that remain after the owl is finished eating. Songs, stories and art projects about bones went on for over a month and one little girl asked for only one thing for Christmas – a real skeleton. For the children, a disposition for curiosity, a love of hands-on learning and an ability to focus and work as a group are just some of the benefits. For teachers, the ability to still be excited and passionate about learning is a huge bonus!



Lynn's experience with Emergent Curriculum:

I've known about Emergent Curriculum for years, but it was always challenging to develop this for me, as I was working in a cooperative nursery school setting and most of the staff were parents who have no training in Early Childhood Education. As with many things at Pacific Primary, having such confident staff to work with is essential and I have seen the benefits of an Emergent Curriculum and learning that happens for the children, as well as the staff. There is more depth of the learning that happens in our classrooms than you may find in many first and second grade classrooms.

There is something missing in a style of teaching where staff look at curriculum as theme-driven, 12-month segments, while trying to keep learning exciting, fresh, challenging and meaningful. You may dread the Dinosaur theme because you have done it a thousand times. This never happens at Pacific Primary because Emergent Curriculum approaches curriculum and learning from a very different perspective where both the children and the teachers' interests grow together. That is when you can see and feel the magic happening!

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Bianca Di Palma

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Kali Polk-Matthews

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Lisa Fox

Appreciating Behind-The-Scenes Curriculum Planning

By Sandy Crockett and Vanessa Maren

At the heart of Pacific Primary’s Emergent Curriculum is the school’s talented and dedicated teaching staff. They work hard to create meaningful educational experiences around our children’s interests.

Projects in an Emergent Curriculum are driven by the children’s own interests and ideas, so the teachers diligently observe those ideas as they develop and create an environment in which the children can explore these ideas more deeply. “We pay close attention to what the children are playing, what they are talking about, and what they’re gravitating towards in terms of toys, materials and artwork in the classroom,” explains Coyote Lead Teacher, Nadia Jaboneta.

“The children toss us the ball, which is an idea,” says Polar Bear Co-Lead Teacher Brian Silveira. “We listen and think, ‘What can we do with this idea?’” We toss the ball back to them in various ways: perhaps through reflection at morning meeting; introducing different play materials; bringing in an expert or deciding what field trips to take. Then we see how the children react and what they do with that. Maybe it takes hold, or maybe it doesn’t and we have to go in a different direction. We make these decisions as we go along.”

When children in a classroom keep returning to a topic day after day, it becomes an opportunity for the teachers to design a project based around that topic. The teachers meet to brainstorm ideas on how to create projects that will include science, literacy development, music, pre-math, art, field trips, and all the other aspects of the school’s educational program through a process called ‘webbing.’

The Penguin class developed their project on “Songs Come to Life,” which followed the children’s curiosity about specific songs and topics related to those songs, according to Penguin Lead Teacher, Saeda Fuller. The children participated in a variety of experiences and activities when exploring the song “Two Little Black Birds,” such as learning about bird habitats; helping to create nests with natural materials; making eggs with painted rocks; making little black birds with pine cones, paint and feathers; testing flight movement; weight of feathers and discussed migration at morning circle by testing temperatures of objects that were warm and cold.

Finally, the teachers keep an eye out for when a project has run its course. As Brian explains, “often-



Darby leads the Coyotes and Gray Whales in a volcano experiment.



Expressive Arts teacher Elyse teaching the Rainbow Dolphins how to include friends in their play.

Why Webbing?

Gray Whale Class
January 12, 2012

Journal of the Week
Mahroushka Paparian

Many of you may have noticed the amazing wood sculptures that the Gray Whales have been working on! The children continue to return to this activity day after day and therefore, the teachers have decided to begin a class project focusing on wood working, buildings, and architecture and have decided to name our project... "BUILD!" The teachers all met and began a curriculum planning web to support this project in all areas of the curriculum. We have blown up our web and placed it near the classrooms back door. We invite the Gray Whales, as well as parents to add curriculum ideas for our project!

"Webbing gives us the chance to explore the possibilities of any material or idea, in order to make decisions about use: Is it worth doing? Is it likely to generate developmentally appropriate activities? What are the ways we might want to enrich the activity by being prepared with other materials or questions? How long might children's interest continue? A web is a tentative plan. It doesn't tell you exactly what will happen or in what order. That depends in large part on the children's response. So, first you plan and then you start trying your ideas, paying attention to what happened, evaluating, and moving on with further activities."

- Taken from "Emergent Curriculum" by Elizabeth Jones & John Nimmo

Penguin Class Journal
Tues. May 26th 2009

Peer Learning and Emergent Curriculum at Its Best!

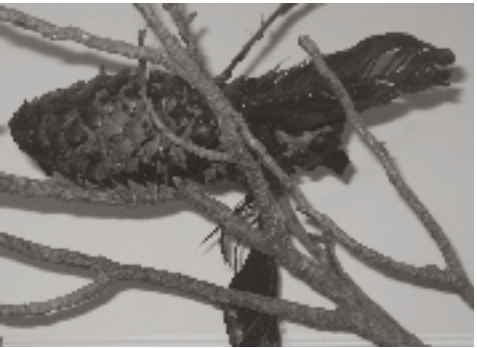
It all began when Ilari posed the question to Marcus, "What is a bus route?" Marcus explained that these are the roads that busses travel on, which prompted a dialogue regarding roads and maps. After being shown a MUNI map of real bus routes in our community, the children drew their own representations on large pieces of paper. They catapulted ideas off of one another before taking out the toy busses and driving them on the routes that they created.

This chain of events demonstrates how children can learn from one another, which allows them to expand their understanding of concepts through their classmates. This also exemplifies the benefit of Emergent Curriculum; the children displayed an interest, and by the teacher providing the right materials to feed their curiosity, optimal learning was able to take place.

times a project will come to a natural closing, where we’re struggling for more things to do, or if the children’s interest doesn’t seem to be growing. Then we will say ‘OK, it’s time to bring this project to an end.’

The class will then hold a “project party” to honor the work of the class. Teachers create documentation panels which capture the joint children-teacher learning process through photo displays, specific descriptions and explanations of how the work on the project progressed. Parents are invited to school and the children lead their parents around the class explaining the photo displays after the teachers lead a circle time which includes highlights of the children’s contributions. Parents bring a potluck dish to share with the class to celebrate the significant learning and work that occurred. This powerful and meaningful acknowledgement empowers the children and teachers, while educating the parents about what good early childhood education looks like with Emergent Curriculum. Then the process for a new project starts anew.

This is the way Pacific Primary teachers create the rich educational environment that has a significant impact on our children’s development and which sparks further curiosity. It’s rewarding for the teachers too, as each class brings new interests every school year. As Nadia explains, “my favorite part of the Emergent Curriculum is that the teachers learn along with the children. Every year I get more knowledge under my belt from investigating with them.”



Penguins create a little black bird from pine cones and feathers.

Pacific Primary Staff
2011-2012

Orange Sun School

Penguins
Saeda Fuller, Lead Teacher
Patricia Phillips
Mary Nolan

Prairie Dogs
Leanne Foley, Lead Teacher
Roxanne Latif
Aimee Scorza
Lisa Koester, Afternoon Teacher

Pandas
Kelly Fox, Lead Teacher
Alyssa Chazen-Richards
Kathleen Hernandez

Polar Bears
Brian Silveira, Co-Lead Teacher
Veronica Lee, Co-Lead Teacher
Shirin Djafarzadeh

Music and Movement Specialist
Kevin Gerzevitz

Expressive Arts Specialist
Elyse Jacobs

Support Teacher
Sean O'Connor

Sunroom Coordinator
Sabrina Brewer

Afternoon Sunroom Teacher
Sean O'Connor

Afternoon Supervisor
Rebecca Walsh

Chef
Amy Fernandez

Permanent Substitute
Sarah Watkins

Parking Coordinator
Doug Diboll

Family Perspective on the Peace Parade

By Mimi Rosenheim

My son, Walker, came home from school recently and started talking about Martin Luther King. His teachers have been talking a lot about Dr. King and what he stands for and I got to see what a huge impression his teachings can make on a community — even when that community is under the age of five.

Friday, January 13, 2012, was the Pacific Primary Peace Parade celebrating the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Families were encouraged to participate so Larry, Aunt Hilary (a Pacific Primary Alum), Grammie Jane and I crammed into the Rainbow Dolphin classroom with another 50 or so people, to help the kids get ready for the big march. All the kids had made peace crowns, necklaces and signs and we had a massive Circle Time, where the Lead Teacher, Jamie asked the kids to remind us all what Dr. King taught us. “No hitting,” declares Walker. “No biting,” “No spitting,” “No fighting,” other kids contributed. And Jamie asked what we should do instead of these things.

“Use your words.” “Share.” “Go to the Peace Place and solve the problem.”

The Peace Place is a special spot in each classroom that the children use when they have a problem. While there, they state the problem, discuss options and, together, work toward a solution. It’s amazing to watch four-year-olds resolve differences better than most adults.

Once it was clear the kids truly understood what this parade was all about, they practiced the chant they would share with the rest of the school — “Martin Luther King was a good, good man and a good, good man was HE. He was a teacher, a preacher, a man of power who worked hard for YOU and ME!”

The kids were ready and we joined the other 200 Pacific Primary kids, parents and staff for the walk. It sounds corny and a bit stereotypical for a preschool in San Francisco to have a Peace Parade, but I am not a skilled enough writer to communicate the feeling I had watching these kids celebrate the teachings of a man who died the year before I was born. It’s so easy to get caught up in the history and the complexities of the time, but, at its essence, it is very simple. Dr. King thought things were unfair and he used his words to drive change. And as if the parade didn’t have enough of an impact, we all reconvened in the courtyard and listened to the last three minutes of the “I Have a Dream” speech.

Then we sang “Happy Birthday, Dr. Martin Luther King” and had popsicles.

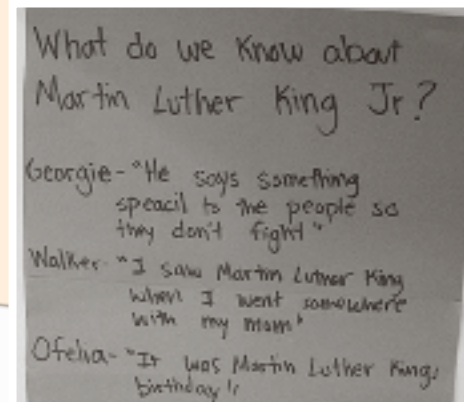
Thank you, Pacific Primary, for making such a special and memorable experience for our family and every family at the school.



A Coyote shares his thoughts on Dr. King on his sign in the Peace Parade.



Rainbow Dolphins share their thoughts on Dr. King before the Peace Parade.



Dear Belann
I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciated and enjoyed this morning. I've lived here in San Francisco for 11 years and been a citizen for five of those, but today was the first time that the spirit of Martin Luther King Day was really brought to life for me. Being part of the Peace Parade with Lucy and all the other Pacific Primary parents and staff really brought Dr. King's achievements for us - and the meaning of his words - into sharp and happy perspective. I have to thank you and everyone at PP for that.

All the best - Richard Wood,
Panda Parent

Teachers Eric Wilson, Nadia Jaboneta and Hanna Alemayeha with students and parents at the Peace Parade.



Letter from Belann:

I am very proud of the work we invested years ago to make this event and all of our celebrations meaningful and appropriate for young children. We met outside of work for months discussing how to bring our values to each of our special events, while still making them developmentally appropriate. The Peace Parade was especially challenging, as we wanted it truly to be something that would inspire the children and not just the adults. We pondered the question “What does “Peace” mean to a young child?” and “How can we celebrate Dr. King’s birthday in a way that is inspiring throughout the year and not just on one day?” This is at the heart of Peace Education. The teachers are moved by the impact that the Peace Parade has made in each child’s experience. Throughout the year, they often hear a child say, “Don’t hit - Dr. King wouldn’t like it!” Many of our graduates take this message to their Kindergartens and help their new schools honor Dr. King.



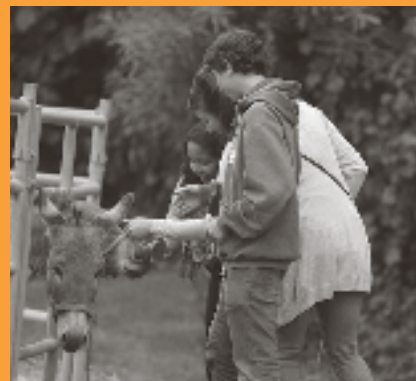
Parents and students singing “We Shall Overcome” at the Peace Parade.

The Role of Field Trips in an Emergent Curriculum

By Keith Eiger, Lynn Turner & Vanessa Maren



Gray Whale children sketching the "Painted Ladies" of Alamo Square on clipboards during a recent fieldtrip.



Pacific Primary alumni accompany a summer field trip to Ember Ridge Ranch.

Critical learning takes place both inside and outside of the classroom. Within each Pacific Primary classroom, ideas from field trips emerge as the foundation to pursue learning, with materials appropriate to the child's age, and with guiding outcomes adaptable by the teacher. The teachers use weekly curriculum meetings and the process of webbing (described earlier) to discuss how field trips can support their Emergent Curriculum project.

As part of the Gray Whale "Build!" project, the class took a walking field trip to sketch the "Painted Ladies" near Alamo Square. During circle time the next week, they compared pictures of two different houses and made a Venn diagram comparing the similarities and differences between the two houses. Mahroushka was amazed at how much the children noticed. The class then headed to the Ferry Building to meet with a Gray Whale parent who is an architect and whose firm designed the remodel of the Ferry Building. He gave them blueprints and samples of materials for the children to make dioramas. The Gray Whales bought sandpaper at a neighborhood hardware store during another recent field trip, to sand down the wood sculptures they continue to build.

The result is not only a better understanding of the symbolic world and the real, but an understanding that learning and discovery is something they can actively engage in at any time in the world around them.

Our summer bus field trips continue to enrich the children's learning experience by allowing us to take longer trips out of the city twice a week in the summer. Additionally, these field trips provide a special opportunity for alumni to participate. Alumni that are 12-15 years old may volunteer to help in the classroom for up to two weeks, while those 16 and older are paid as Summer Assistants and work as classroom aides to help with the field trips. Our alumni have fond memories and an amazing connection with the summer field trip program and look forward to reconnecting with Pacific Primary each summer. This is a unique program that continues to keep our young teen and adult alumni connected to the school and models for our current families, the special ties that Pacific Primary fosters.



The Coyote Class of 2011 focused on "Farm to Table" as their Emergent Curriculum project ranging from the planting, harvesting, preparation and transportation of food. This theme led to interesting field trips, such as Chinese tea tasting with a brief discussion on how Chinese tea is grown and harvested (top left); a trip to a meat store that led to a robust discussion on how meat is priced according to its weight (right); a sub-theme on food transportation led to a field trip the to the San Jose airport where the children did a guided tour to explore the inside of an airplane including the cockpit (bottom left).

Diversity as a Primary Strength

By Seth Blacher

Why do some people view challenges as an opportunity, while others become passive or cannot respond? Why can some people accept constructive criticism in such a way that furthers personal or professional growth, while others take the same criticism personally? Why do some people adapt to change more easily, while others struggle with it?

While there are many variables that contribute to an individual's personality or a response in a specific situation, according to Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D., an internationally recognized authority on brain development, healthy childhood development creates a strong foundation for happiness, positivity and productivity that one keeps for life. So how does one acquire this strong foundation, and achieve a sunny outlook, flexibility, and a creative, open, problem-solving mind?

Dr. Perry asserts that awareness, tolerance and respect learned in diverse environments are critical developmental building blocks that serve as the benchmark for not only social responsibility, but also flexible thinking. Over the years, educators have found that exposing children to diverse environments at

a young age significantly contributes to the three tenets of flexible thinking: 1) the ability to cope well with change; 2) enjoying the process of change and 3) the ability to assimilate change. Another social-cognitive ability that has been linked to diversity is the skill of "multiple classification." Up to the age of three, children sort objects across one dimension only, but as they get older, they develop the ability to sort objects and people along multiple dimensions, such as multiple social categories that don't necessarily match traditional stereotypes, e.g. a woman and an engineer.

The rich diversity at Pacific Primary provides our skilled teachers an opportunity to help our kids understand and celebrate both visible and invisible differences every day. Our teachers are trained to establish a classroom environment where children can comfortably express different thoughts and opinions and still feel validated. In the classroom, teachers weave diversity into the curriculum by establishing an initial framework for the kids to learn about each other and allowing their interests to drive the classroom experience.

Children begin exploring differences amongst themselves by talking about their families, creating a family tree with photos and a language chart. This sparks further interest and discussion about different types of families.

Each year, two Staff Development days may include workshops on a broad range of human diversity, including gender, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, and all types of families, including adoptive, single parent and LGBT parents. It's a way for the staff to re-connect with the mission of the school, with diversity as its cornerstone, and to provide a safe place to talk about social and cultural issues. Many Bay Area schools send representatives to Pacific Primary to understand how it approaches and reinforces diversity. What other teachers come to our school to learn, we as parents already know: that Pacific Primary's teaching and reinforcing of diversity is a strength that serves our children now and into the future.



Children discussed their family members and what they mean to them, learning that everyone has different types of families.



Sandpipers doing imaginative play in the garden through a puppet show.



Coyote Lead Teacher, Nadia Jaboneta discussing respect.

Guess who?

They're not just teachers, leaders, and all around great people... Match the Pacific Primary staffer to their secret. By Rachel Levin

- 1 I used to drag race at Infineon Raceway in my 20's.
- 2 Scrabble – my highest score is 466, best word: Eulachon for 113.
- 3 Whenever I am near a body of water, no matter how cold, I feel a necessity to immerse myself!
- 4 I played broomball in high school.
- 5 I was awarded a prize for 3rd place for a national poetry contest. The prizes were awarded by Maya Angelou.
- 6 I was on-air talent for the California State Lottery's Decco Game.
- 7 I've ridden my bicycle across the country twice.
- 8 I love olive oil so much – could be because my mom gave us olive oil to drink as children.
- 9 I was born in New Hampshire.
- 10 I won my high school's vocal honors competition with an aria from Mozart's Cosi Fan Tutte.
- 11 My first job was in a record shop. (I was considered very new wave.)
- 12 I have over 5,500 children's picture books in my living room and own over 14,000 books altogether.
- 13 I was born on a moving train in France!
- 14 Elvis Presley winked at me at the Ear, Nose and Throat doctor's office in Beverly Hills.
- 15 I have hopped trains (for fun).

- A Darby Hillyard, Coyote Teacher
- B Veronica Lee, Polar Bear Co-Lead Teacher
- C Leanne Foley, Prairie Dog Lead Teacher
- D Kevin Gerzevitz, Music and Movement Specialist
- E Seeka Yang, Business Manager
- F Jamie Solomon, Rainbow Dolphin Lead Teacher
- G Kelly Fox, Panda Lead Teacher
- H Nichole Huffman, Rainbow Dolphin teacher
- I Joan Vigliotta, Administrative Assistant
- J Sarah Watkins, Full-Time Substitute
- K Nancy Anderman, Sunroom Teacher
- L Melodi Dalton, Music and Movement Specialist
- M Saeda Fuller, Penguin Lead Teacher
- N Mahroushka Papazian, Gray Whale Lead Teacher
- O Brian Silveira, Polar Bear Co-Lead Teacher

Answers on opposite page...

How Music and Art Contribute to Pacific Primary's Emergent Curriculum

By Patricia Callaway



Dragon Dance celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year.

Music and Expressive Arts are tightly woven into the daily curriculum at Pacific Primary. Their purpose is to nurture each child to feel confident in his or her choices, to problem-solve, to collaborate in teams and work independently, and, most importantly, to have fun while developing key skills.

According to OSS Music Specialist Kevin Gerzevitz, the Orff Schulwerk educational approach partners well with the Emergent Curriculum because both share the value of setting up an environment whereby a child may explore and play, while the teacher simultaneously guides and follows the interest of the child. This provides a flexible framework for children to experiment with pitch, rhythm and movement. "If several children show a strong interest in pitch, we can further the discussion with games and activities related to pitch," Kevin explains. "For example, a simple song about fire engines can provide an opportunity to visually and vocally express pitch moving up and down, as we move our hands up and down matching the movement of a vocalized siren sound."

"During the school year, I read countless stories to the children and it's music to my ears when someone asks, "Can we act out this story?" says Melodi Dalton, YSS Music Specialist. There are certain fables and folktales selected especially for re-enactment. "When I ask, "Who are the characters in this story?", Melodi continues, "the response is a resounding, 'I want to be...' This tells me that the story is a winner and every child has identified with some role in the story." "Early on, a quiet child might relate to a reserved character, but by the second run-through, that same child might be willing to play a more extroverted character. We start re-enacting stories with the Gray Whales so that by the time they are Coyotes and Rainbow Dolphins, they are quite comfortable with the process and gain confidence in their public speaking."

With younger classes, such as the Sandpipers, simple tunes quickly capture their interest, regardless of whether the song is in English. For example, Funga Alafia, a greeting song from Ghana, has only three words and two phrases. The children sing this song endlessly. Melodi notes, "After warming up their vocal chords and hearts with this familiar tune, it's easy to gently lead the conversation to a new topic or song such as 'Della wore her new shirt all day long.' This song allows each child a chance to share a special movement or describe special things, such as a band-aid on the knee."



Music Specialist Melodi Dalton guiding the 2011 Coyote play which is a re-enacted play inspired by the Ghanaian story, "The Leopard's Drum".



Polar Bears testing a telescope invention during Expressive Arts.

During Expressive Arts, a program created by Elyse Jacobs, now celebrating her 26th year at Pacific Primary, the children have extended periods of time in small groups to explore their own creative ideas and interests which are unique to them. There is no fixed agenda, and the focus is process-oriented to provide a setting of continual practice to master specific skills. Children have the freedom to explore a particular medium or theme, for an hour or for the entire year. For instance, Penguins may focus on using scissors to cut tape, a Prairie Dog on storytelling, Pandas on making traps, or a Polar Bear may get to focus on finding a solution for attaching sleeves to a dress or articulating a sculpture.



Pandas making traps from colored masking tape.



Penguin focusing on cutting tape.

The Arts program primarily uses recycled materials and emphasizes re-use and resourcefulness in our children. What child doesn't enjoy playing with boxes? Ah, but box inventions are a whole different matter. Boxes have been repurposed into ships, computers, mountains, beds, helmets, microscopes and trains with its inventors articulating its creation and many uses. These enriching experiences give children the life-long gift of a strong and satisfying confidence in their creative abilities.

Room Parents and Special Events Parents

Yellow Sun School

Coyotes
Room Parents: Lynda Sanjurjo-Rutter and Kristin Slye
Special Events Parents: Lucy Tam and Mary Tienken

Rainbow Dolphins
Room Parents: Sarah Miles and Candice Moy
Special Events Parents: Jeanine Cliff and Mimi Rosenheim

Gray Whales
Room Parents: Lisa Coris and Helen Dias-Abhyankar
Special Events Parent: Sarah Hale

Sandpipers
Room Parents: Scott/Jinee Ellis and Sangita Forth
Special Events Parents: Darlene Ruiz and Erica Weiss

Orange Sun School

Polar Bears
Room Parents: Renee Espinoza and Chris MacGillis
Special Events Parents: Andrea Beach and Tony Powell

Pandas
Room Parents: Beth Flynn and Lisa Radler
Special Events Parents: Shelley/Greg Lindgren and Siu Wong

Prairie Dogs
Room Parents: Claudia Guimaraes and Cara Porchia
Special Events Parent: Heidi Hess

Penguins
Room Parents: Sara Leeder and Elena Matsis
Special Events Parents: Elizabeth Falk and Kelly Stiles

Guess who? Answers

- 1. B
- 2. D
- 3. F
- 4. H
- 5. J
- 6. L
- 7. A
- 8. M
- 9. C
- 10. E
- 11. G
- 12. I
- 13. N
- 14. K
- 15. O

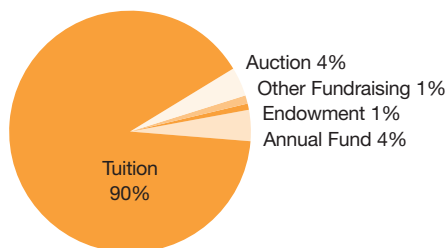


Primary Talk

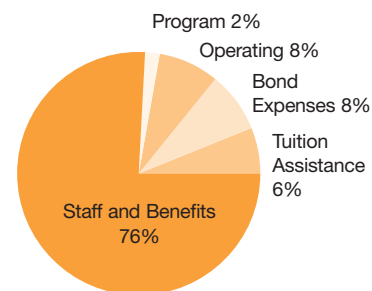


See that cluster of folks on the sidewalk? You know, that bunch of parents sipping coffee and swapping stories about, oh, their kids, their weekend plans, their hectic mornings... it's not some private party you weren't invited to—it's Primary Talk. And it takes place on the **third Friday of every month**—thanks to over-caffeinated volunteers who set up hot coffee stands outside of YSS or OSS, with the sole hope that you'll stop and talk. Take a moment out of that hectic morning to meet and mingle—before moving on with your day. Be sure to stop by!

School Income (2011/2012)



2011/2012 Income



2011/2012 Expenses

Alumni Notes

By Rachel Levin



Kelsey Siegel



Tara Siegel



Former Pacific Primary students and fraternal twins, **Kelsey Siegel** and **Tara Siegel** ('79) are now Pacific Primary parents. Kelsey is also a former Rainbow Dolphin teacher and Tara is serving her first year on the school's Board of Directors. Kelsey's three-year-old son, Caio, is a Gray Whale and Tara's son, Declan, is a Coyote, now in his third year at Pacific Primary. Kelsey says he used to love the Cook Reetha's fried chicken—

"It was the BEST!" He remembers being read to at rest time by his teachers. "Pema Chodron (now a prominent Buddhist teacher and author) used to read 'Little House on the Prairie' to us. I also loved music with Bob Leswan—he was the composer of the Pacific Primary song we sing our own kids today." As for enrolling their kids at Pacific Primary, both say it was a no-brainer. "We actually returned to SF from Brazil earlier than planned, just so Caio could attend," says Kelsey. And Tara says they moved back from NYC, so that they could send their son, Declan, to Pacific Primary and moved here one week before Declan's first day. Now their kids play with the milk crates just like they used to! Caio loves music with Melodi and comes home singing a new song every day. And Declan loves "everything" about school. Tara gave birth to daughter, Oona, in October and hopes she'll be a Sandpiper in 2014!

Abe Pressman ('95) is in his final year at Brown University, studying applied mathematics and biology, drawing a daily comic for the school newspaper, singing in school opera, and telling stories to live audiences. He is a co-founder of a student-run storytelling group at Brown (Thank you for inspiring him, legendary

PP storyteller, Heidi!). His sister, **Zoe** ('99), is in her final year at the Bay School, where she's been involved in theater, writing for the school publications, and working with the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Scott A. Shulkin ('95) is teaching at Creative Arts Charter School in San Francisco.

Hannah and **Miles Cosselman** are attending Alice Fong Yu Elementary in 6th and 2nd grades. Hannah is serving her second year as a peer mediator at AFY and says that Pacific Primary trained her well for this role. Miles loves reading in English and Chinese and says "hi."

Kate Delaney ('85) graduated from Barnard College in 2001 and now lives with her husband and two boys in Wisconsin, where she received her masters in Early Childhood Education at University of Wisconsin. She is now getting her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and is teaching at the university. She considers PP the "model school" and says that while she has found good programs for her children, she has "yet to find one that lives up to the standard of Pacific Primary."

As we prepare for our 40th Anniversary in 2014, we are updating our Alumni database. If you have new contact info or have reconnected with a former Pacific Primary friend, please let us know at info@pacificprimary.org