



# Pacific Primary Sun

Inspiring a love of learning, creating and caring

spring  
2023



Lead With Love

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## 2022-2023 Newsletter Committee

Pacific Primary Sun is an annual newsletter written and produced by current parents at 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:

Amy Yu Gray, Britt Candell, Cory Bradley, Dana Weissman, Emily Wood, Jessica Shaw, Joelle Henning, Kate Shipman, Kinnari Jhaveri, Madeleine Katz, Rachel Levin, Sean Barr, Shane Killian, Tim Shipman, Tracy Sevush, Will Sevush

## 2022-2023 Pacific Primary Staff

### ORANGE SUN SCHOOL

**OSS Director:** Madonna Stancil  
**OSS Site Supervisor:** Kristen Baggerly  
**Penguin Teachers:** Jen Marcus (Lead), Geoffrey Guevara, Hannah Grant  
**Prairie Dog Teachers:** Sarah Cleary (Lead), Shay Harris, Naomi Fiss  
**Panda Teachers:** Kelly Fox (Lead), Alyssa Chazen-Richards, Touché Contreras  
**Polar Bear Teachers:** Emma Fraijo (Interim Lead), Sima Misra, Angel Feeney, Sabine Scherer (on leave)  
**Support Teachers:** Emily Fajardo, Tracy Tsiropoulos  
**Sunroom Teacher:** Sabrina Brewer  
**Music & Movement Specialist:** Kevin Gerzevitz  
**Expressive Arts Specialist:** Joseph Powell  
**Chef:** Amy Fernandez

### YELLOW SUN SCHOOL

**Executive & YSS Director:** Ilsa Miller  
**YSS Site Supervisor:** Natalie Karet  
**Sandpiper Teachers:** Eric Wilson (Lead), Ariel Jordan, Hanna Alemayehu  
**Gray Whale Teachers:** Anna Vongvixay (Lead), Kathie Behlen, Keiko Shimosaki, Kellie Quitoriano  
**Rainbow Dolphin Teachers:** Lucia Johnson (Lead), Randy Johnson, Soara DeLouvre  
**Coyote Teachers:** Michelle Murano (Lead), Riley Graham, Tiffany Reyes  
**Support Teachers:** Ben Tursi, Jonathan Gregg, Anne Randall  
**Sunroom Coordinator/Teacher:** Mario Carranza  
**Music & Movement Specialist:** Kate Offer  
**Expressive Arts Specialist:** Kellie Quitoriano  
**Chef:** Cristina Juarez

### BOTH SITES

**Pedagogical Leaders:** Brian Silveira, Nadia Jaboneta  
**Finance Director:** Amie Haiz  
**Admin & HR Manager:** Nicolle Germano  
**Parking Coordinator:** Doug Diboll  
**Alternate Teachers:** Mahroushka Papazian, Sarah Watkins, Ike Pinkston, Cameron Shaw, Darby Hillyard

# Letter from the Directors

*“Before progress can be made on social issues like gender inequality and racism, work needs to be done to ensure the planet is sustainable enough for humans to even exist.”*  
—Angela Davis

We feel incredibly fortunate to carry forward the mission and values that Pacific Primary has woven into its fabric for 49 years. In addition to maintaining the “magic,” we have a shared vision to guide our school toward an increasingly sustainable future. Cultivating an environmentally literate generation of children will have an exponential impact.

The staff joins us in this vision as we return to a sense of normalcy. Because of them, Pacific Primary has been an innovator in working toward a greener school. We live our Eco Statement through environment clean-up events, vegetarian meals, reuse of materials, low water usage, composting, recycling, purchasing Earth-friendly materials, solar panels on the Orange Sun School, and daily joy in celebrating the Earth. We were inspired by our guest on Professional Development day, Rukia Rogers, and the work she is doing with children as custodians of the Earth.

At a time when eco-anxiety is recognized as a real concern, our young children are empowered by their teachers. To channel Belann, we model that every problem is solvable. We value our students' inherent ecological intelligence and early understanding of the connection between sustainability and equality. Our emergent curriculum is full of inquiry, songs, literature, puppet shows, expert visits, and play.

Receiving our San Francisco Green Business certification this year gets us closer to our vision of a sustainable school. While the Green label is important, and literally puts us on the map, the certification is proof that the ongoing efforts of the Pacific Primary community make a difference, especially in the lives of our children.

We have many things in the works at Pacific Primary, from supporting other preschools to obtain a Green Business certification to teachers sharing their wisdom at upcoming conferences. Our next short-term hope is procuring licensing-approved rain barrels and an eco-related library that honors our connections to the Earth.

We can only imagine where this work will take us in another 49 years and it is with joy that we envision being at the forefront of educating for sustainability. We are grateful to the founders for their creation of a school that honors interconnectedness with the natural world, and we will continue to look to the children to lead us in our work.

In community,

Ilsa and Madonna



# The Peace Parade: Coming Together in Community

By Tim Shipman



On a rainy Friday morning in January, over 200 teachers, parents, children and bystanders came together in the annual Peace Parade celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As Kim Nelson, a Panda mom shared, "The peace parade is an incredible community building event. It really embodies the mission of the school in the community, which puts love, empathy and inclusion above all else." That spirit of community was reflected in the wide diversity of the marchers, the engagement from the parents, and even in the excited waving from neighbors, waving at kids from their open doors. Shannon Chang, a Prairie Dog parent emphasized the peace parade's special place: "It was the first kind of post-COVID activity, and it was very special just to see everyone; all the kids signing, all the parents and teachers out—so awesome!"

## A tradition like no other

"This is just the event. I never want to miss it, it's such a special tradition, it's pretty incredible," shared Rachel Rouda, a Prairie Dog parent. The peace parade was a through line of experience for many parents. "I did this with her nine-year old sister," Katie Cabler said. "It creates interesting conversations about peace and equity. For other parents, it's the event that

brought them to the school. Karishma, a Panda class parent, shared, "The peace parade is not just what helped us to get to learn about Pacific Primary, it's one of the main reasons we wanted to join this community."

For so many parents, the parade creates an opportunity to have conversations that they might not have had on their own. Mustafa and Canary, Alma's parents in the Gray Whale classroom, shared, "I was reading her a book earlier this week about cousins, and there's this one kid who's the peace ambassador, and Alma asked 'What does this mean?' I told her and she said, 'Oh, exactly like Dr. Martin Luther King.'" As Bertie Thompson, a Rainbow Dolphin parent said, "The Peace Parade means that we can get together and raise children who are going to protest and make the world a better place."

Maybe the most universal message came from Krista Healy-London, a Sandpiper parent: "The Peace Parade is all about love." That love was on the smiling faces of everyone who marched: love of the neighborhood, love of the teachers and administrators, and love of the community we all share.



*"The Peace Parade means that we can get together and raise children who are going to protest and make the world a better place."*

# Folk Dance is Back!

By Madeleine Katz

Fridays are a special day for our family; we begin with a cappuccino and “cappuccino with no beans” at Ali’s on Hayes and Central, and end with a family shabbat dinner. But in between, we are diehard Folk Dancers.

The Pacific Primary Folk Dance is a tradition that was started in 1984 by Heidi Tzortzis, the Music and Movement Specialist. Heidi, an Orff instructor, wanted to bring the community together every week, to sing and move together, to affirm our school’s values of love, inclusiveness, and peace. Our current and beloved music teachers, Kate Offer and Kevin Gerzevitz, also derive much of their pedagogy from the Orff tradition, an approach to teaching music, where “The spirit of play

brings joy and curiosity to the process.”

The musical program at large, and the Folk Dance in particular, was one of the casualties of the pandemic, as Kate and Kevin shifted to zoom sing-alongs in the fall of 2020. Kevin explained that “Children need tactile experiences together, especially young children. Screens deprive them of that. I dislike teaching over Zoom because it removes so much of the interaction that happens between people who are together in the same room.” Ruby Bean (Panda) echoed the value of togetherness when she said “Folk Dance is when I get to be with my friends.” Kate offered the sole positive aspect of Zoom, which was that “it allowed us

some means by which to gather safely, and saved us from having to completely give up our Friday sing-alongs.”

This past fall of ‘22, the Folk Dance returned in its original format. Personally, I love seeing the children sing with confidence and energy, spontaneously break out into dance (looking at you Cimorene) and develop musicality through moving their bodies and voices with the guitar, and when we’re lucky enough to bring both schools together, Kevin and Kate’s harmony. The greatest gift of Folk Dance is that grownups are invited to witness and participate in this joyful learning. In the words of Sonya Frost (Rainbow Dolphin) “We invite grownups to folk dance so they don’t miss out on fun!” At least that’s the benefit I see; but each understands our presence in their own way. Abigail Archer (Rainbow Dolphin) feels that grownups attend “so we can hold their hands during the circle.” I like to imagine fearless Abigail taking it upon herself to help her grownup feel more comfortable at Folk Dance.

When asked about the importance of inviting grownups to join as active participants, not just as observers, Teacher Kate explained that “Parents (and

*“It’s very powerful for young children to see their parents, teachers and peers all together at the same time, singing the same words together, taking the same steps together.”*

grown-ups generally) spend endless amounts of time censoring themselves because they aren’t “good” at stuff and it’s very much the opposite of what we’re asking children to do every day at Pacific Primary: try, fail, learn, try again, grow, etc. Plus, if the kids are surrounded by grown-ups who aren’t singing, they might start to think that singing is just for kids.” Teacher Kevin echoed Kate’s when he reflected on the reciprocal meaningfulness of singing together. ““It’s very powerful for young children to see their parents, teachers and peers all together at the same time, singing the same words together, taking the same steps together. I think it’s important for adults to model this to young children, but I think young children sometimes model this for adults who have become self-conscious about their voice.”

To close the Folk Dance, both schools engage in the Spiral Dance, a peppy conga-like dance that somehow leads you through a maze of bodies and

faces, back to your, mostly, original spot with the one reminder, “hold hands and don’t let go!” This dance stands out to me not just for the puzzle that it is, but because, even on our Rainbow Dolphin Audrey’s first Friday Folk Dance, her little sister and aspiring Sandpiper, Mira, felt beloved and accepted by the community, who called her by name and cheered her on as she wove in and out of the smiles unknown to her. It’s hard to picture how our musical leaders, Kevin and Kate, achieved this level of engagement, love, musical nuance and umph during the years that the folk dance was remote. And I am grateful for the return of in person folk dance, and their enthusiastic leadership.

While Pacific Primary’s music program was a major draw for our family, I acknowledge that many families outside of our community do not have the same privilege of an arts program, and even within our community, of the flexibility to attend the Folk





# Exploring the World, Fieldtrips Return at Pacific Primary

By Kate Shipman

When I was a young, there was nothing more interesting than a school field trip. I loved to go out with my teachers and friends, to experience and learn new things. Most important to me as a learner was to simply shake up an often “boring” everyday routine. So when I signed up to go with my son’s class on a field trip this year, it was a surprise when I had so many conflicting feelings on field trip day. “Are the kids going to be ‘nice’ to me?” my 5-year old self asked. “Will my son want to be seen with me?” my mom-self asked. And my adult, post-Covid self asked, “Am I a ‘safe person’ now? Is this safe?”

I knew from my experiences as a school-age kid that field trips are fun, but I wasn’t sure why it was so important for me to help make this special experience happen for my son’s class. So I was glad that when asked, Teacher Emma was so quick to respond. She wrote, “As a weekly practice at Pacific Primary, field

trips give us wonderful opportunities to make ‘real life’ connections with the learning that takes place in our classroom. Whether we’re learning how to function in the community on the bus, including neighborhood children at the park, marveling in the natural world on our walks or connecting our curriculum to the ‘real world,’ field trips help add a further layer of meaning to our work.”

With the help of volunteers, Polar Bears took trips this year around the block, to Alamo Square Playground, Buena Vista Playground, and even to Golden Gate Park via Muni bus. Parents, grandparents, and caregivers came along to line up with the kids to go out into the world.

As a post-pandemic transfer to Pacific Primary, I had never been invited to or had the opportunity to volunteer in my son’s classroom. While most Pacific Primary parents were adjusting to being together in person, my family was also adjusting to Pacific Primary.

On my first field trip, I finally got to see my son as he is in the classroom and in nature with his friends. Here I was, nervously handing out neckerchiefs to the Polar Bear classroom. After buddy assignments and lineup, I walked through the city with my son enthusiastically grasping my hand on one side and a friendly-but-unfamiliar hand warmly holding my other.

It turns out that it wasn’t just new for me: it was new for many of my son’s teachers, almost all of the children, and most of the other chaperones, too. After years of pandemic safety worries, this was, for all of us, a morning to break away from two years of habitual social sacrifices: the tying of neckerchiefs, holding unfamiliar hands, and feeling the trust from others. We all enjoyed the beauty and the feeling that we could all be safely out together in an unpredictable and exciting world.

## From the Curriculum Journal

Hi Families,

The children have had a spectacular four weeks of exploration with large and small blocks construction play. We read and had a discussion about two wonderful books, “Rosie Revere Engineer” and “13 Buildings Children Should Know” that has amazing pictures of pyramids, skyscrapers, temples, castles, and cathedrals from all around the world. In addition, we placed beautiful pictures of prominent landmarks of San Francisco and New York up in the classroom for the children to see; Salesforce Tower, Transamerica Pyramid building, The Palace of Fine Art, The Chrysler building and the Freedom Tower.

After reading the books and looking at the pictures, the children shared what their favorite building was and forge forward to build it.

We challenged the children to collaborate, share their ideas with one another and make a plan before building.

To support the children’s interest and play, we co-construct and scaffold their learning as they work either independently, in a small or large group.

As we researched and looked at books and pictures together, the children learned new vocabulary words. They used their communication skills, dramatic play skills, problem solving skills, spatial awareness, basic math skills to identify, and compare various shaped size blocks needed for building their structures.

A small group of Dolphins did a still life drawing of their collaborative structure they made together.

Other children made a story together about the skyscraper noodle park they had made and afterwards read it to the class.

Our young engineers and architects learned to design, create, problem solve, balance, and work together to make awe inspiring structures; Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, Leaning Tower, Salesforce building, the Freedom tower, Chrysler building, The Palace of Fine art, temples, skyscrapers, airport, and Christmas land using various loose part materials, tea lights, and felt materials on plexiglass and a large mirror. We are so proud of you and will continue to provide experiences to deepen your new found interest in building. Way to go Dolphins!

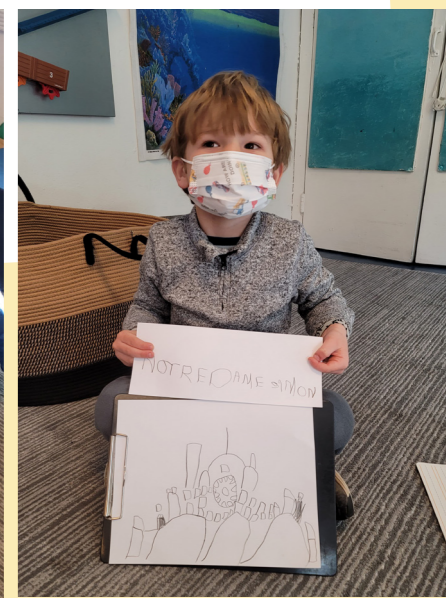
During our morning circle we read and discussed, “In my heart- A Book about Feelings.” The children took turns sharing what they think love is and how they share love, they did special art activities with Kellie during Expressive Arts, and they listened to stories, and learned new love songs with Kate.

The children completed their first self portraits using skin tone crayons. They also did a still life drawing of beautiful sunflowers that Kenzo donated to our classroom.

On our field-trip to Alamo Square playground on Wednesday, the children were delighted to see San Francisco’s beautiful views and some great historical architecture and all of the skyscrapers in the background. Thank you Eric, Marissa, and Cameron for joining us on our outing.

Lastly, the children explored sensory activities, several new literacy and math activities, fine motor activities, complex puzzles, and fun gross motor activities and outdoor play.

—The Rainbow Dolphin Teachers



# Cheesy Lentil Recipe!

By Chef Amy Fernandez

*Cheesy Lentils are a real crowd-pleaser at Pacific Primary. Think of these as a legume mac n' cheese, easy to make, full of protein and fiber. (serving size 4)*

Cook the rice, and set aside.

Sautee the onion in olive oil, add the salt and cook for 2 minutes. Add the spices and lentils, stir. Add the broth. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Cook partly covered for about 30-40 minutes or until lentils are soft. Add more water if needed, you will want a bit of the brothy goodness.

Assembly! There are 2 ways to do this one is...

Put rice in a large bowl, add cheese then top with lentils and stir to melt the cheese (what we do at school). Or stir together the lentils and rice, put in an oven-safe dish and top with the cheese and bake at 350 for about 20 minutes.

This is great served with broccoli (to have the full PP experience!)

Enjoy!



## Ingredients

1 1/2 C Brown Lentils  
1/2 white onions  
1 t dried oregano  
1 t dried basil  
1 t garlic powder  
2 t salt (or to taste)  
1 t black pepper (or to taste)  
3 C Broth or Water  
1/2 C shredded cheddar cheese  
1 1/2 C rice (we use brown basmati rice at school)  
and 3 C water (to cook the rice in)

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