



the PACIFIC PRIMARY SUN

WINTER 2004-2005



Thirty Years and Counting!

By Diana Wolf and
Laura Galvin

When the doors opened at 1500 Grove Street 30 years ago, students and their families entered not knowing exactly what to expect, but they had confidence in the mission of the school. The nine founding families (Twists, Jones, O'Donnells, Shinefields, Hobsons, Reclays, Weinsteins, Grahams, Kindreds) met when their children attended Phoebe Hearst Preschool. They had a common dilemma: they needed a program for their 4-year olds. With advice and support from Mary Bodo, then Director of Phoebe Hearst, these families made plans to implement their vision of a school that would involve a diverse group of parents, emphasizing the importance of art, music and dance.

How did it all begin? "Somebody said, 'Let's start a school!'" said Walter Jones, who together with his wife, Roxie, and their daughter, Paulette, was one of the founding families. "We wanted to come up with our own curriculum, and not have to answer to the state government. It was the 1970's and we were all young and foolish. If we had known how hard we had to work...well, thank goodness we didn't."

The group persevered and created a school in less than a year. After considering a site in Pacific Heights, but declining because it was too far away from minority children, the building at 1500 Grove, a former mental health counseling facility, was rented at first and ultimately purchased. The school was named Pacific Primary: "Pacific" borrowed from the previously considered Pacific Heights location and "Primary" because the school originally was a pre-K-3 school. However, after the first five years, when San Francisco's School District reorganized to continue elementary school to grade 5, Pacific Primary's leaders recognized that its greatest contribution could be made at the pre-K level.

Each Pacific Primary director has made a long term commitment to the school:

Mary Bodo (1974-1982), Charlotte Burchard (1982-1995), and Belann Giarretto (1995-present). The result: a smooth evolution of the school to the current day. All have led with inspiration and a never-ending focus on the emotional, social, cognitive and physical development of young children. The excellence of the school was recognized by Child magazine in 1992, naming Pacific Primary one of the country's top ten pre-schools. And it continues to be one of the most desirable preschools in San Francisco—with hundreds of applications each year.

An outstanding staff has been the hallmark of Pacific Primary for 30 years. They have nurtured its children with consistent, creative, child-centered and loving care. Staff turnover is extremely low, and many current staff members have been part of the school for a very long time. Teacher Roxie Jones was a parent volunteer when the school opened and became a staff member in 1976. She closed her family daycare at that time, and brought two families with her into Pacific Primary! Helen Powell, mentor teacher, began working here in 1976. Betty McMillian, chef extraordinaire, has been wowing the children with her tasty recipes since 1980. Heidi Tzortzis, Music and Movement Specialist, and Elyse Jacobs, Creative Arts Specialist, have been on the staff since 1986.

While the physical site has changed a bit over the years, the core values and mission of Pacific Primary have remained: a commitment to child-centered learning in a nurturing, safe and secure environment that brings together caring families from diverse backgrounds, and supported by a dedicated and professional staff. Still shining brightly is the Pacific Primary Sun, the school's beloved emblem, created by 6-year old Jill Shinefield, daughter of one of the school's founding families. This newsletter attempts to capture the milestones that have shaped Pacific Primary.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Auction

Saturday, March 5, 2005

Festival Pavilion,
Fort Mason Center
(new site)

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Celebrating our Community *By Belann Giarretto*

Pacific Primary has so much to celebrate—30 years of cherishing, respecting, supporting children and putting their needs as our highest priority.



Three Directors: Belann Giarretto, Mary Bodo and Charlotte Burchard

- 30 years of remarkable and creative teaching that supports children in developing dispositions of curiosity, the love of learning, welcoming differences and gaining confidence in solving problems.
- 30 years of creating a strong community that is supportive, hard working and understands the life-long value of early childhood education. Parent participation makes Pacific Primary possible.
- 30 years of strong leadership provided by our founding director, Mary Bodo and her successor, Charlotte Burchard. I am honored to carry on their work.
- 30 years of celebrating the benefits of the creative arts through our music, movement and expressive arts programs.
- 30 years that would not have occurred without the visionary leadership of our nine visionary founding families.
- 30 years of passionate commitment by the school's Board of Directors. The Board has enabled the school to achieve strategic goals. We are now seen by many as a "model school."
- And almost 30 years of Roxie Jones, Helen Powell and Betty McMillian!

Because the school never rests on past success—we are growing and changing—refining and strengthening and stretching our abilities to provide the best environment for young children to grow and flourish. In the past five years there have been many achievements. Some of the highlights include:

- A Peace Place in each classroom: where we continue to learn problem solving skills.

- An energizing and refined educational philosophy: our teachers now have more time and support to observe, reflect and plan because we've added time for weekly team check-ins and hired a Support Teacher to make observations possible. Emergent curriculum has encouraged teachers to create fresh, new curriculum that allows children to have deep and meaningful learning experiences. Daily Journals, that highlight an ordinary moment in the classroom, are prepared by each team to share these experiences with families everyday. Our Program Facilitator, Laura Galvin, has helped our program reach new heights.
- Leadership in all aspects of diversity: every family adds to our diversity. This year 60% of our families are either African-American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino or bi-racial, and 40% are Caucasian. Elementary and pre-schools administrators visit to see how we have achieved such richness. I delight in sharing with them that at our most diverse, we have far outreached our fundraising goals.
- Founding members of the LGBT/ECE Initiative: a ground breaking model to encourage other schools to create welcoming environments for LGBT families.
- Environmental awareness: teaching children how to care for our environment through the ECO-schools project involving the entire family.

That's just a quick snapshot of a few of the exciting things that go on at 1500 Grove Street. The first time I entered the school, I felt what countless others have felt—the warmth, love and creativity that is Pacific Primary. I am very happy to say that this feeling and our missions are what continues to draw hundreds of families to our school.



"Shine Brightly": 30th Anniversary Endowment Campaign *By Gayle Okumura Sullivan and Molly Dwyer*

As Pacific Primary celebrates 30 years of providing an exceptional and compelling early childhood education that has benefited over 2500 families, we reflect that the school has remained true to its original mission: accessibility, affordability and diversity.

In 1997, several visionary and generous board members created an endowment to ensure and enhance the school's tuition assistance goals. Built upon a few charter donations and thousands of individual contributions, the endowment reached its goal of \$500,000 in 2001—a year ahead of target.

"There is no place comparable to Pacific Primary. We felt compelled to do what we could to preserve and ensure the longevity of this school, which serves as an educational model and beacon," says a former board member and endowment founder.

Today the endowment stands solid at \$650,000, and the board has begun to tap the endowment interest to help fund the

tuition assistance program. This year the endowment interest will provide 14% of the \$73,223 tuition assistance budget. Next year the board expects to increase that share to 25%. The vision of the endowment's creators has come to pass and now can advance to the next level.

To celebrate Pacific Primary's commitment to accessibility, affordability, and diversity, the board has launched the 30th Anniversary Shine Brightly Endowment Campaign. The goal is to raise the endowment to \$1,000,000 by 2007; every contribution—large or small—will help us attain this ambitious goal. To kick off the campaign, a family of a recent alumnus has generously pledged \$100,000, bringing the endowment to \$750,000 and the goal of \$1,000,000 well within reach!

Please help secure access to our school for as many families as possible. With your support, generations of graduates will Shine Brightly as they move forward into the world, doing what they can to make it a better place.

News from around the School *By Diana Wolf*

While many things remain the same, Pacific Primary is a community that welcomes growth and change to strengthen our program. While we hold true to our core values, we incorporate improvements along the way. Here's what's new:

Chicken: In the wake of a hurricane (East Coast!!), a little chick made its way into the hearts of the children at Pacific Primary. Frances, our newest community member, was hatched at a farm in Half Moon Bay and adopted by Brian Silveira, Coyote Lead Teacher, on behalf of the children. Her name memorializes the Florida storm of late September.

Climber: Pacific Primary welcomes a new play structure to its grounds. Installed in late August thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of many Pacific Primary families, this multi-level, state-of-the-art piece challenges the children as they climb, slide, jump, balance, and shout (oh, that's another skill!). Unfortunately the original

dome from 1974 had to be retired due to new playground regulations.

Caring Volunteers: Your children working with our children! Alums 12 years old or older have the opportunity to volunteer at Pacific Primary. Last summer, Director Belann Giarretto formalized a program to offer volunteer opportunities to former students who have an interest in early childhood development. Grads came for two weeks each to work with students and learn from teachers. Who knows...someday they may be teachers themselves!

Curriculum: This year the staff at Pacific Primary took on the task of articulating an overview of the Pacific Primary curriculum for each classroom. The curriculum overview is a guide to things typically observed in the four classrooms and in the Music and Movement and Expressive Arts programs and elaborates on the uniqueness of each one. Please call Pacific Primary for a copy.



*"Celebrate
accessibility,
affordability
and diversity"*



Alumni Reflections

By Giselle Chow

My favorite time of day? Picking up my son from Pacific Primary. Lately I've begun to pause at the door to the Rainbow Dolphin room secretly to observe Koji. Last week I found myself hesitating in the hallway to watch him play Circle Games on the cement with Heidi. In short, one could say I'm spying on him.



And when I shamelessly spy, I wonder what memories of this special place he will carry away and what lessons will endure as he progresses through the years of education ahead.

Recently I spoke with alums about memories and feelings they associate with Pacific Primary; different things came to mind, but certainly shared experiences also have held true over the past 30 years.

Zack Miller, a Coyote in 1991, remembers playing in the sand and jumping on the milk crates. Once when his class performed a play, several children wanted the role of king, so they cast three kings for the one queen! Zack remembers the diversity of the curriculum and the staff, including his teacher Xavier who was openly gay and "probably changed a lot of people's opinions by just being there." He regards his time at Pacific Primary as "life-changing. It really broadened me. Those early years are really crucial and Pacific Primary helped me become a more open and accepting person even though I already had two moms. It's a very 'San Francisco' place. Anything and everything is cool there."

Lick-Wilmerding High School Assistant Head Ilana Kaufman, who attended Pacific Primary in 1976, remembers Retha's fried chicken and Friday Box Dinners, which families often took to the park to eat. She recalls the neckerchiefs worn on field trips and the garbage truck's rounds: "the back gate would open, the truck would back in and take all the garbage away." Her best memories are of the warm afternoons when

"the teachers would take out the hose and flood the sand area so we could build this amazing sand village with streams and rivers." She remembers feeling Pacific Primary was "an amazingly positive and supportive environment that never really felt like 'school'. If it is possible to develop a four-year old critical thinker, that's what that place did for me. I cultivated a lot of skills and developed a solid foundation from my time there." Ilana describes the high school-age Pacific Primary alums she works with as "positive, warm kids, often from a cultural background that they are aware of and proud of. They're progressive and also grounded. They're not overly scholarly, and at the same time they appreciate why they are in school. They're just really nice kids with really nice families."

Marjorie Soler attended Pacific Primary in the early '90's and now works there during the summer. She remembers the dome on the playground and Betty, who made "the best macaroni." She has fond memories of Roxie and her Coyote teacher Katherine, who taught her about African music, art and culture. Margie recalls "being really excited to go to school. I was friends with everyone. I miss it now, and it's really fun to go back. It had a real community feel, and I loved the special days when we could bring friends or family to the school to show the place off." Margie says, "They had a special way of dealing with arguments and conflict. I learned a lot of good social skills and to be open-minded and accept everyone. If I had a problem with someone, I was encouraged to confront the issue, sit down and talk about how I was feeling."

Though the children and their families will continue to come and go as they have over the past 30 years, it's reassuring and also somehow not surprising that the lessons my child is learning everyday about himself and about developing empathy—and living in community—are the same ones articulated by previous generations of alums. As we look forward to the next 30 years, acknowledging and honoring stories from the last 30 can help us describe "the stuff of Pacific Primary," why we as parents love it now, and how our children may look fondly upon this remarkable place in their futures to come.



Let's Celebrate!

By Wendy Smith

Reconnecting friends, teachers, and families is especially meaningful in this the 30th anniversary year at Pacific Primary. On June 4th, 2005, we are proud to have our community come together for this very special commemoration. Save the date and please join us. There will be more information on time and location to follow, so keep your eyes peeled!

Our goal is to bring all of you together to share memories and reconnect with the many wonderful people that have built our community. Last year our second annual Pacific Primary Alumni Picnic brought together almost 150 people from our 1995 through 2003 graduating classes. This year, sky's the limit.

Our official Pacific Primary Alumni Class Parents include classes as far back as 1995. We'd like to reach back further and involve more of you. If you would like to be a class parent or you know of any families that have been "lost," please let us know.

The Alumni Class Parents are listed below:

1995
(RD) Louis Blumberg, Ellen Friedman, 566-9107
(RD) Lindy McKnight, Erin Cunningham, 821-4844
(Coyote) Debbie Hamolsky, 550-1950
(Coyote) Charlotte Brown, 346-4152

1996
(RD) Rene Biba, 665-0890
(Coyote) Linda Nakell, 665-6451

1997
(RD) Scott Cowan, 333-1695
(RD) Jon & Tomoko Flynn, 921-4956
(Coyote) Peg Strub, Archie Nash, 566-1287
(Coyote) Stephanie De Maria, Jeanette Brown, 650-728-5828

1998
(RD) Ross Moody, Dina Goldman, 587-3457
(Coyote) Susan Colson, Maureen Anderson, 282-1791
(Coyote) Lynn Ferrante, Jonathan Wong, 826-8829

1999
(RD) Laura Jacobson, 682-0400
(RD) Janet Mohle Boetani, Mark Manasse, 585-4263
(Coyote) Naomi Jay, 282-4728
(Coyote) David Lahar, Julie Westcott, 567-3236

2000
(RD) Karin Immgergluck, Michael Mueller, 564-6904
(Coyote) Ann Regenstein 664-7447
(Coyote) Bob Scott, Rick Lewis, 431-2165

2001
(RD) Audrey Koh, Gaeta Bell, 647-8908
(RD) Maria Rogers-Pascual, Josh Karliner, 751-1943
(Coyote) Megan Englander, Gilbert Robinson, 431-7437
(Coyote) Tom Hatton, Supriya Shivakumar, 666-3396

2002
(RD) Helen Rosen, 665-8373
(RD) Brian Powers, Katie Riggs, 585-7551
(Coyote) Judith Bell, Jim Greenberg, 510-595-1823

2003
(RD) Debbie Lee, 753-2107
(RD) Hedy Chang, 242-9345
(Coyote) Tim & Lori Sheridan, 255-7119

What a Staff!

How can we express the gratitude we owe
For thirty years of kids in tow
Who have been given such incredible care
With love, understanding and patience
to spare

Many great teachers have taught in our halls
And have given our children nothing too small
Managing all by "using our words"
No more loving a place were these all heard

You have given us comfort in our hectic lives
By knowing that our children have a place
to thrive
In a place where they are not alone
A place they know as a second home

The children are not the only winners here
The parents have learned year after year
To figure it out as we muddle through
All with your guidance, experience and views

You have touched our lives in such special ways
You have nurtured our children with
firmness and praise
And while we can know only a special few
Our hats go off to all of you!



Pacific Primary's
30th Anniversary
Party, Saturday,
June 4, 2005

Save the date!



**PACIFIC PRIMARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

2004-2005

Molly Dwyer, *President*
Beth Rubenstein, *Vice President*
June Lee, *Treasurer*
Gayle Okumura Sullivan, *Secretary*
Tracy Burris
Laura Catena
Deanna Chechile
Liza Geary
Fif Ghobadian
Christopher Lord
Chris Miles
Gautham Reddy
Wendy Smith
Amy Scharf
Leslee Subak
Michael Warren
Diana Wolf

ROOM PARENTS

2004-2005
Sandpipers
Loreen Hanak
Jean McGuinness

Gray Whales
Danielle Lane
Joelle Chartier
Grace Kahng

Rainbow Dolphins
Denise Olson
Jill Davis

Coyotes
James Bair
Deborah Kwan

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

Alumni Notes

Daria Saraf (77) graduated from Columbia and is now a realtor in New York City. She is married and says the best educational experience she ever had were her years at PP.

Caroline Harrover (80) graduated from Columbia University in New York and taught in the South Bronx. She was trained in environmental science at Duke and now works at Booz Allen in Washington, DC and is getting married in June.

Taylor Shaw (84) is a visual effects animator.

Cameron Shaw (88) is a Senior at Northwestern University.

Alexandra Ames (89) is currently a student at the University of St. Andrews in St. Andrews, Scotland.

Jessica Ladd (91) is a freshman at Pomona College.

Anthony Mayes (94) is a sophomore at Urban High School and is doing well academically and in sports. His is 6'2" tall and still growing.

Rory Hanlon (95) is great in 7th grade at Stuart Hall.

Shanna Murray-Wolf (97) is on her way to high school.

Thomas Biba (96) will graduate from Town School (8th Grade) in June, 2005.

Adam Bellm Kahn (96) is a 7th grader at Live Oak and continues the love of drama and stories that he began at PP.

Benjamin DeLuca (96) is in 7th grade now, just transferred to Brandeis after seven years at Rooftop and is studying for his Bar Mitzvah.

Gabriel Edlin (97) is a 7th grader at AP Giannini.

Yurij Melnk (97) is in 7th grade at Head-Royce School.

Daniel Meyer-Okeefe (00) is doing great at Brandeis.

David Medoff (00) is a 4th grader at Presidio Hill.

Talia and Jacob Regenstein (00, 02) are in 2nd and 4th grades at Presidio Hill School.

Betty's Secret "It's Lunchtime!"

MACARONI AND CHEESE

1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. oil
3/4 lb. mild cheddar cheese, grated
1 lb. elbow macaroni

2 Tbs. margarine
3 cup milk
1 Tbs. flour
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. Bake in an oven proof container for 30-35 minutes. Voila!

It was a good year!



Look who else is turning 30!
Michelle (RD), Mahroushka (SP) and Julia (C)

Iris Feldman (01) is having a great time in 2nd grade at FAIS. She is reading, writing and speaking French and English.

Tyler Ryan (01) is in the 2nd grade at SF Friends School. We will always treasure and love PP!

Danny Fishman-Engel (01) is thriving at SF Day School. Thanks for the wonderful start!

Danya Rubenstein Markiewicz (02) is still close friends with her Coyote girl friend group: Sofia, Sophie, Iris, Peal, Joan, Emma and Izzy.

Sandra Katz (04) is doing great in kindergarten. And we're forever grateful to PP for the wonderful foundation.

Nina Solinas (04) loves kindergarten and enjoys tremendously to visit Pacific Primary as much as possible.

HELP US FIND LOST ALUMNI!

- Are you in touch with former families and classmates?
- Are you interested in becoming an alumni class parent and reaching out to your Pacific Primary class for the purpose of the Annual Alumni Picnic?
- Do you know someone who would like to celebrate the 30th anniversary?

LET US KNOW!

Contact Pacific Primary at 415.346.0906 or write us at 1500 Grove Street, San Francisco, CA 94117.