

Pacific Primary Sun

—inspiring a love of learning, creating and caring



**This newsletter is lovingly dedicated
to the memory of:**

Helen Clara Powell, Beloved
Teacher and Afternoon Supervisor

Michael Aquino, 2008 Alum

Brian Scully, father of 2016 Alum
Jack Scully-Falk and incoming
Madeline Scully-Falk.

Letter from the Director | Belann Giarretto

Dear Pacific Primary Community,

I vividly remember my first visit to Pacific Primary. It was in the spring of 1995 and I was applying for the Director position. I walked into the school and immediately felt the love and joy that was, and still is, palpable at Pacific Primary. I knew that this was a very special place when I saw such happy and engaged children and the attentive and loving staff. To my great amazement I was unanimously hired by the Search Committee. I was truly excited, but had no idea just how fortunate I was to begin my tenure as the new director of this incredible school.

After 27 years, I now know that this is the most unique and rewarding place to work. I have had the council and support of this tremendous and diverse community which has inspired me to make changes and create a school where we collaborate and learn something new every day. I feel grateful to have been the Pacific Primary Executive Director for almost three decades. To witness the growth and development of our young children, and support their astounding abilities is richly rewarding. To work with such a dedicated and experienced staff has been a delight. I am proud that we have so many teachers who are celebrating their 20th or 25th year at the school. Brian Silveira, Mahroushka Papazian, Sarah Watkins, Eric Wilson are still beloved teachers at our school. And Elyse Jacobs, just retired after 36 years as the Expressive Arts Specialist!

I know that we are changing the world in positive ways by building children's dispositions of curiosity, love of learning, creativity and standing up when something is unfair. Through our anti-bias curriculum, we are building open and flexible temperaments that welcome differences and are not afraid of change. I cannot imagine more rewarding and transformative work, we are creating a more kind, just and loving world one child at a time!

I was interviewed by the school after my first year and was asked "How do you envision your role as Director." My answer back then was very similar to how I see my role now. "I have to keep my finger on the pulse on all aspects of the school, and be accessible to the teachers, parents and children. In a way, it's like being a parent: you have to give positive encouragement, set appropriate limits and envision the future. I want to create a strong base with respect for the staff and parents, so that the school can function in any capacity and handle any ongoing issues."

While I acknowledge the significance of this change of leadership, I know I am leaving the school at a time of tremendous strength despite the challenge of COVID. Our school is strong and secure both programmatically, thanks to our staff and pedagogical leaders as well as financially. It will not be easy to leave this beloved community, but I'm confident in the strengths of our new ED Ilsa Miller, who will begin on June 20th and Orange Sun School Director, Madonna Stancil.

Words do little to convey my deepest gratitude to the staff, parents, Board of Directors and children for helping me navigate my role as Executive Director and for their love, support and encouragement during the celebrations as well as the challenges. This experience has been one of great growth for me professionally as well as personally. And while I'm ready to go on to new adventures and have time to explore and travel the world, Pacific Primary will always be in my heart.

With love and appreciation,

Belann





A Tribute to Elyse Jacobs, Passionate Puppeteer and Founder of the Expressive Arts Program

Natasha Saggarr Sheth



Children helping a puppet getting a Covid test. They used a puppet to express their worry and fears. The children were able to practice calming down the puppet by holding her hand and reassuring her that it would only tickle and the puppet was able to have her test, given by the child that was most worried.

For the past 36 years, Pacific Primary has been incredibly fortunate to have had Elyse Jacobs, Expressive Arts Specialist, in residency at the school. Elyse was first hired by the school to conduct a program using puppets to help children with problem-solving and learning basic social and emotional skills. Her daughter attended Pacific Primary at that time. Elyse then expanded the program to include open-ended art experiences that used recycled items and "loose parts," forming the Expressive Arts program as we know it today, which is an integral part of the Pacific Primary curriculum.

Elyse trusts and believes in each child's ability. She believes that children do not need "art classes" where they are taught what to make. They need art experiences where art becomes another language and a window into a child's thinking. In the Expressive Arts program, children work with a wide variety of art materials as a tool for "open-ended" artistic expression, developing motor skills, and problem-solving. Decades of children lucky enough to experience Elyse's program continue to be more excited at their birthday party by the box than the toy inside, because they see the many possibilities for creativity with the box, whereas the toy only offers one way to play! The Expressive Arts program gives children a life-long gift, fostering creativity, confidence, and focus.

Puppets, too, are an incredible learning tool. Puppets are bridges to empathy, allowing children to stand inside the shoes of others. Elyse's incredible use of puppets in the classrooms helps children work out their fears and

explore big feelings and difficult social issues that inevitably arise during the school year. Several puppets, including Turtle and SuperSeaweed, have nurtured generations of Pacific Primary students.

After an incredible career, Elyse is now moving on to new adventures and retired from Pacific Primary in March 2022. In her words, "it's been an honor to nurture creativity in your wonderful children." Elyse will be greatly missed, but her influence will continue to make a positive and creative difference at Pacific Primary for years to come.

We love you, Elyse! Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our children. Kellie Quitoriano (YSS) and Joseph Powell (OSS) will proudly carry on your torch.



An Update from Pacific Primary Pedagogical Leaders | Brian Silveira and Nadia Jaboneta

"We want to know what the children think, feel, and wonder. We believe that the children will have things to tell each other and us that we have never heard before. We are always listening for a surprise and the birth of a new idea. This practice supports a searching together for new meaning. Together we become a community of seekers."

-Louise Boyd Cadwel



As part of the Pacific Primary leadership team, the Pedagogical Leaders oversee Pacific Primary's pedagogical and professional development. The model we envision is one of a close and respectful collaboration where the Pedagogical Leaders work together with the Directors and Teachers on projects utilizing each other's strengths while maintaining awareness of current research, trends, and news in the field of Early Childhood Education.

When Belann first approached us about her idea of creating the new role of Pedagogical Leaders, we were extremely honored and a little nervous. We had taken on the role of program coordinator while working full time in the classroom for several years already and knew the importance of supporting the educators and school community to think deeply about our teaching. The Board approved the addition of these new positions. Working exclusively as Pedagogical Leaders would allow us more time for reflection and action. We started the school year editing the staff handbook and parent handbook with a pedagogical lens. We created new and robust New Teacher Curriculum binders with articles that speak to Pacific Primary's commitment to social justice, emergent curriculum and reflective teaching.

We have also been working directly with the teachers. We study their learning stories and journals together. The teachers wanted to go deeper into what emergent curriculum looks like in practice so we began Communities Of Reflective Practice (CORP) groups to capitalize on our collective knowledge. Once a month, teachers and staff use their lunch breaks to attend and Chef Amy makes a delicious lunch for us. We facilitate the meetings using a reflective protocol called "The Thinking Lens," created by Deb Curtis, Margie Carter and Ann Pelo. We spend an hour engaged in conversations and research based on their interests. Educators are as hungry for connections as the children are, especially during these times of masks and social distancing. Together, we can sustain our curious minds and joyful spirits in our work. Reflecting with other teachers in a community of practice can strengthen our abilities to respond to the children in the classroom and share meaningful experiences with them. This opportunity is also another wonderful way to bridge the two schools.

We recently hosted a Lead Teacher Retreat where we all workshopped how we plan for holidays, celebrations and traditions in meaningful ways. It has been a rich and satisfying beginning to our new roles which we imagine will only evolve and get better and better. We look forward to helping plan for our upcoming Work Week in August. We suggested an umbrella theme that we can engage in as a school for the coming year, "Relationships, community and a sense of belonging." We will also be identifying brilliant thinkers to lead workshops for the staff on topics such as Anti-bias Education, Schema Theory and Positive Discipline.

Margie Carter and Deb Curtis (ECE authors and mentors) remind us that these experiences will also help teachers:

- Evaluate and grow our reflective teaching skills.
- Align our daily work with our larger goals, values, and vision.
- Gain a heightened sense of self-awareness and a stronger image of children, examine the details of our environment, and challenge us with new perspectives.



Creamy Chickpea Coconut Curry Recipe

Chef Amy Fernandez

Serves 2-4 people

1 onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 T coconut oil
2 cups chickpeas (rinsed if canned, cooked if dried beans)
1 (15oz) can coconut milk
1-2 cups of broth, either vegetable or chicken
1-3 T curry powder, to taste
1-3 teaspoons turmeric, to taste
1-3 teaspoon cumin, to taste
1 head cauliflower, cut into bite sized pieces, either roasted or sauteed
3 small red potatoes small white creamer or fingerling potatoes are great too)



-In a medium sized stock pot, saute the onions and garlic in coconut oil on medium heat, until the onion is transparent. Add the curry powder, turmeric and cumin to let the flavors come out in the spices, about 1 minute. Add uncooked chopped potatoes and stir until coated with spices.

-Add broth (use less for a sauce style, more for a soup) and coconut milk (feel free to add more if you like)

-Add chickpeas and cook over low-medium heat until the potatoes are cooked, about 30 minutes

-While the sauce is cooking, chop cauliflower into bite sized pieces, toss with olive oil and roast until soft and browned, about 20-25 minutes in 400 degree oven

-Add cooked cauliflower to the sauce or serve on the side

-Serve over cooked brown rice.

-Experiment with ingredients; add cayenne for spice, use different vegetables: peas, cherry tomatoes, roasted sweet potatoes, chopped greens such as kale or baby spinach work well.

Pacific Primary Staff 2021-2022

Pacific Primary Staff 2021-2022

(Individual Photos listed alphabetically by First Name)



Head Chef & OSS
Chef
Amy Fernandez



Executive Director
Belann Giarretto



YSS Support Teacher
Ben Tursi



Alternate Teacher
Cameron Shaw



YSS Chef
Cristina Juarez



Parking Coordinator
Doug Diboll



Expressive Arts
Specialist
Elyse Jacobs



OSS Support Teacher
Emily Fajardo



Alternate Teacher
Ike Pinkston



Alternate Teacher
Jeanette De Los Santos



YSS Support Teacher
Jonathan Gregg



YSS Music & Movement
Specialist
Kate Offer



OSS Music & Movement
Specialist
Kevin Gerzevitz



OSS Site Supervisor
Kristen Baggerly



OSS Director
Madonna Stancil



Alternate Teacher
Mahroushka Papazian



YSS Sunroom
Coordinator
Mario Carranza



YSS Site Supervisor
Natalie Karet



OSS Sunroom
Teacher
Sabrina Brewer



Alternate Teacher
Sarah Watkins



Finance Director
Amie Haiz
Business Manager
Shannon Rice



Pedagogical Leaders
Brian Silveira & Nadia Jaboneta

Pacific Primary Teachers 2021-2022



Penguins - Hannah, Geoffrey, Saeda



Prairie Dogs - Angelina, Touche, Shay, Sarah C.



Pandas - Joseph, Kelly, Alyssa



Polar Bears - Emma, Tiffany, Sabine



Sandpipers - Hanna, Eric, Ariel



Gray Whales - Keiko, Kathie, Anna, Kellie

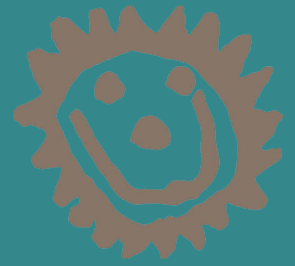


Rainbow Dolphins - Soara, Randy, Lucia



Coyotes - Darby, Riley, Michelle

Letter from the Board President | Chris Edwards



There are any number of things I could write about this year...change and its ironic constancy, grit and perseverance, the lessons we've learned about life and children as a result of the pandemic, the havoc that the last several years has wreaked on communities, including ours. But rather than revisit these topics, I'd like for you to take a trip with me back to 1995.

Oasis, Coolio, No Doubt, Smashing Pumpkins, and 2Pac dominated the radio. ER, Friends and Frasier were early in their runs. Apollo 13, Pocahontas, and Braveheart were released that summer, and the DVD, the Sony Playstation, and Javascript all made their debuts. At the corner of Baker and Grove sat Hick's Temple Church of God, and across the street was a small, squat, yellow building that for the last 21 years had housed Pacific Primary, a preschool dedicated to diversity and inclusion. The school was undergoing a transition, having just completed a nation-wide search for the third director in its history—Belann Giarretto was beginning her tenure at Pacific Primary, which had been recognized as one of the top ten preschools in the country just a few years earlier. Belann jumped in with both feet—and her heart and soul, enshrining emergent curriculum and a focus on the children, deepening anti-bias education, and ensuring that Pacific Primary continued to build and deepen its community through everything we do—the auction, folk dances, maintenance days, pot lucks, and making the school a haven for both children and their parents.

Now, 27 years later, we find ourselves in a similar place. After nearly 3 decades of mental, physical and emotional devotion to Pacific Primary, Belann is retiring and passing the torch to Ilsa Miller. The school that Ilsa inherits continues to be one of the preeminent preschools in the country with its focus on our children, helping them develop, learn, and become responsible citizens of the world. It also continues to be a leader in inclusion, diversity, and anti-bias education, with a magical and long-tenured staff. But in the meantime, many things have changed. The school now has an endowment that has grown to \$4 million, which helps to fund more than \$500,000 in tuition assistance annually. And, it has doubled in size, with the Orange Sun School opening in 2008 on the site of Hicks Temple, increasing our annual community to 155 students and their families.

I am very excited to welcome Ilsa to the Pacific Primary family. She is incredibly warm, thoughtful, and focused, as well as a natural in the classroom with the children. Having spent significant time with her through the interview process and since, I know that she understands just how special Pacific Primary is and that she is dedicated to the school values and ensuring that we keep up with the changing world around us. I can't wait to see how she will continue to build on our foundation and lead us through the coming years (and challenges unknown) with joy and love!



Save the Date

Sunday, June 12, 2022

Block Party to celebrate
Belann Giarretto!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 2022

Ali Hu	Christina Yoo	Kate Norton	Rayleen Hsu
Amber Binkley	Denise Zusman	Kate Robertson	Shivani Garg Patel
Andrea Contreras	Emily Simas	Lauren Byrne	Soniya Sapre
Andrew Sparks	Erin Skiffer	Meenal Balar	Stacy Youngblood
Britt Candell	Francis Ebong	Monica Fernandez	Tarek Halim
Chris Edwards	Freesia Lee	My Le Adams	Zac Rose
Christen Key	Jeanene Ward	Rachel Rouda	