

HARDING ELEMENTARY NEWSLETTER

Wrapping up the Fall Trimester, 2016-2017

First Trimester Grade Level Meetings

Each year, Mrs. Takimoto meets with students in grade level meetings several times throughout the year. In September, she met with each grade level to discuss how they want to be as a community and what skills they would like to work on.

After some discussion, the students voted on one area as a goal for this trimester. They then brainstormed tactics for reaching these goals. First graders chose to focus on listening and responding and came up with some great tips, including to turn and face the person talking and to let people finish what they are saying. Third graders agreed that they could work on not running when it isn't appropriate. Fifth graders are focusing on positive talk and are making presentations to share the different ways they can help reduce put-downs, name calling, and bullying. Sixth graders are working on patience, both with others and with themselves. They decided that staying with a hard problem while asking for and then accepting help was a great way to be patient with yourself.

In late November, all grades met with Mrs. Takimoto again to reflect on how well they met their goal and to choose the next one. Here are the student reflections and next steps:

- **1st:** We are good at listening and responding, mostly. We want to work on using our words to remind each other of how we want to behave or talk.
- **2nd:** We agreed that we needed to continue working on kind and fair game playing.
- **3rd:** We slowed down a lot - we want to work on getting along with each other better.
- **4th:** We allowed all to participate with mixed results - we want to work on good word choices; supportive and thoughtful words.

- **5th:** We want to continue working on positive talk. We had mixed results and want to practice more by "passing it on."
- **6th:** We forgot to work on the first goal - we want to understand and work on integrity.

Ask your student how the grade level goal is going and what they are doing as an individual to improve the school climate.

Principal's Report from the October PTA Meeting

All teachers completed their initial assessment of students' reading levels in September and sent home information to parents/guardians. They now have a grade level picture of where everyone is and can plan for the next steps. By conference time, teachers had assessed students again and shared each student's growth with parents. Parents received a letter in the Wed. folder with strategies to help your child's reading. The reading level is a guide to help us choose books that are in a student's Zone of Proximal Development. These are books that are both easy enough that children are not frustrated, and challenging enough to promote growth in their reading skills.

All of the school's leadership groups met in late September to get to know each other and to brainstorm ideas about revising Harding's mission statement and vision to reflect common core standards and 21st century skills. The gathering included PTA executive board members, School Site Council (SSC) members and teachers who are part of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). It's been several years since we as a community examined our goals and mission statement and now seems like a good time to assess where we are and where we want to go. Look for a chance to review this work after the new year.

New Faces at Harding



Linnea Weld, Garden Coordinator

The Harding PTA is very happy to welcome Linnaea Weld as our new garden coordinator. Linnaea is an Oakland native and alumna of Oakland Technical High School. She recently graduated from Whitman College in Washington with a degree in Environmental Humanities. At Whitman, she ran the school's composting program where she created a "compost bike." She and other student volunteers would ride around campus on the bike, picking up food scraps and taking them to the composting facility. She was also the Education Intern at the Friends of Sausal Creek, where she created educational activities for children and families. She loves animals and used to work on a goat farm in Southern Utah.

Linnea was happy with the turnout for the first garden work party—over 25 people—and would love the community's help with the garden, particularly with organizing the garden area, fixing the drip system and general maintenance. If you'd like to be part of this core group, please email her at hardinggarden@gmail.com. Linnaea also welcomes volunteers to help during class time. Next time you're at school, stop by to check out what's growing in the garden and meet Linnaea!

Ioulene Intano, Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Q: How long have you been teaching?

A: I have been teaching for almost five years now and more than half of those years were spent teaching children who are deaf.

Q: What do you like to do when you're not teaching?

A: I like to read. I like to go to different places. And I love to watch musicals and plays.

Q: What is a book you love?

A: The Harry Potter series is an all-time favorite.

Q: Can you tell us a little about a teacher you really liked?

A: My Kindergarten Teacher. She made me look forward going to school every day. I even went to school on a Saturday, that's how I liked her class.

Q: Do you speak another language?

A: Yes, Tagalog and Bisaya. I also know Filipino Sign Language and currently learning American Sign Language.

Q: What is one thing you'd like the Harding community to know about you?

A: I like hearing stories, any stories! May it be scary, funny, weird. Literally, any.

Suzi Roberts, Transitional Kindergarten

I've been teaching at least 23 years. My first grade teacher Mrs. Sugarman inspired me to be a teacher. I helped out in her classroom in Newton, MA until I moved with my family at the end of 8th grade to Woodland Hills, CA.

The Harding community has been welcoming, supportive and friendly. I love to hike, cook with friends, travel (Paris is one of my favorite places), go to the farmers market, walk on the beach, make art, be with my family, listen to good music (jazz, rock n roll...), and read a good book.

New Primary Music Teacher

Harding's new primary (TK-3) music teacher is Katie Issel Pitre, a teaching artist from Youth In Arts. Katie is originally from the Bay Area but received her training as a teaching artist in New York and worked for various arts organizations throughout the five boroughs for ten years. She has a multidisciplinary background in dance, voice, and theater. Her classes focus on students' creative choices and collaborative skills, and aim to develop their musicianship and listening skills as artists as well as students. This is her second year working for YIA and her first year as a music teacher. She is very open to feedback about her classes, so ask your children what they enjoy and what they would like in music class.

Katie is a mother of a seven-month-old and a three-year-old and lives in Oakland with her two cats and cinematographer husband from Quebec, Canada. She's happy to be at Harding and looks forward to creating music with your children.

Word Detectives on Campus

Congratulations to Harding's first graders--all students earned their Word Detective Badges in November! Word Detectives is a 6-week unit that's part of the Teachers College Reading Program. Students take on the role of a detective, complete with magnifying glasses, missions, and clues. They learn to "look closely" at words. It's a fun way to tackle word attack skills!

What Harding Teachers are Reading:

- *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* by Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman.
- *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by C. Dweck.
- *Identity Safe Classrooms: Places to Belong and Learn* by D. Steele & R. Cohn-Vargas.
- *Number Talks* by S. Parrish

Teachers & Administrators Keep Learning

While students had the day off in October, Harding teachers headed over to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. They spent the day in professional development on the Next Generation Science Standards led by Academy of Sciences education staff, and then had some time to explore the Academy's exhibits.

Teachers also worked with trainers from Teachers College on the *Units of Study for Writing*. They worked in grade level groups to support and hone their writing workshop and student conferencing skills. Topics included lesson focus and time management, and how to embed conferencing in workshops to individualize instruction. Teachers will meet with trainers a total of five days this year to clarify their understanding of the curriculum and how to use it through discussion, watching trainer demonstrations, observing students in action, and practicing the skills with students and colleagues.

Mrs. Takimoto was in New York for a week of leadership for reform training at Columbia University's Teachers College. She says, "As you may know, I formed a principals' learning community a few years ago to work on shifting teaching and learning to common core skill building for all of us. We have been using Lucy Calkins' research and writing curriculum (see below) to guide us and so far have been thrilled with the student and teacher response to the curriculum, *Units of Study for Writing*."

This is the institute Mrs. Takimoto attended, with principals Alison Makela (Madera) and Christine Hatcher (Riverside): <http://bit.ly/2h81Exf>

Websites about school climate

<http://www.nea.org/home/69183.htm>
<https://www.stopbullying.gov>
<http://www.tolerance.org>
<http://identitysafeclassrooms.org>
<http://facinghistory.org>
<http://www.welcomingschools.org>

Harding Community Pledge Wall



Check out the Harding Community Pledge wall on the outside of the MPR/Cafeteria. Students, teachers, staff, parents, neighbors, and other community members were invited to contribute a sticky note heart in response to the prompt, “My pledge to my community is....”, listing something they would commit to doing for the community in the coming year. Thanks to the many people who participated!

Upcoming Special Events

December 16	Kirk Waller Storytelling Assembly MINIMUM DAY
Dec. 19-Jan. 2	Winter Break
January 3	School Resumes
January 14	Work Party 9am-1pm
January 16	No School: MLK Day
January 19	Kindergarten & TK Tour PTA Winter Social
January 27	100th Day of School

December Assembly

On December 16th the PTA will host the first assembly of the school year for our students and staff. Kirk Waller, a long time Bay Area-based storyteller, is a Harding favorite and has been performing for our students for many years. With a lifelong love of story, literature, and the visual arts, Kirk has told at festivals, schools, libraries, churches and special events in the San Francisco Bay Area and across our nation, including the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN. When Kirk is not performing at events, he works as the Director of Storytelling Programs at Stagebridge Senior Theatre Company in Oakland.

Ms. Pine’s “We Make America Great Every Day by...” Bulletin Board

by a Fourth Grade Student

After the election, Ms. Pine had our 4th grade class discuss how we felt. Some of the things we discussed were:

- One thing I want the adults who voted to understand is...
- How do the results of the election affect me and my family?

Then, she put our responses onto a big sheet of paper, and then we made another version with things that we do that make America great every day. We then chose one of those ideas and made mini-posters with one of them. Mr. McCormick’s students participated also. You can come see them on the bulletin board outside room 141.



The things we said included:

- Take care of your pets
- Sit in silence
- Plant a garden
- Learn another language
- Help someone who's hurt
- Learn an instrument

Don’t miss any calendar updates:
view the calendar and all sorts of other updates and news online at

www.hardingpta.org

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