



HARDING ELEMENTARY

Welcome Newsletter | 2017-18

A New Year, a New Look

Something looks different about you, Harding Elementary. Did you cut your hair? Get a new outfit? Oh, I see. You *completely* reinvented your look!

Yup, you probably noticed, the Harding logo got a makeover this summer. Inspired by the class project that Ms. Morse's first graders did for last year's Spring Auction, the new logo was created by parent and PTA member Keith Dickson.

This fun, simple design combines an official feeling of an educational institution and the playfulness that's present throughout our school community. And Harding's core values—kindness, curiosity, courage, perseverance—are also reflected.

We plan to use this logo throughout various internal and external communications, including flyers, signage, letterhead, and the website.

And speaking of the Harding website, the PTA has been hard at work this summer updating the site so that it's full of nothing but useful, accurate information. And we plan to make sure it stays that way all year long. It's still a work in progress, but we'll update you when we feel it has met our high standards. In the meantime, we'll continue to update the site with news, volunteer opportunities, and more, so check it regularly. www.hardingpta.org



First graders' art served as inspiration for the new logo.

Dads' Club

The Harding Dads' Club is an active group of dads and moms who support Harding Elementary.

The group hosts several big events throughout the year. "These events serve not only as fundraisers, but also as ways to build the community within Harding," explains current Dads' Club Chair, Colin Ransdell. "Our fall carnival, for example, is attended by people from all over El Cerrito and neighboring communities."

The Dads' Club also makes themselves available to help the PTA and Principal Takimoto with special projects when needs arise. For example, the two weekends leading up to the start of school, they had over 20 dads work on teacher fix-it lists, bulletin board hanging, container cleanup, and more.

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Message from the Principal

I am very excited about the 2017-18 school year and want to share some impressive numbers with you.

- This is our 4th year of adding a new classroom.
- Enrollment is already above our projections by 44 students.
- 16 teachers attended a Teachers College writing institute.
- 17 teachers started work before their contracted year began.
- 8 teachers planned and provided professional development for their peers.
- 4 teachers are new to having their own classroom.
- More than 25 parents worked over the summer to improve communication, build community, and support getting the school ready to open.
- Almost 20 students gave up a recess last week to volunteer to facilitate recess games until our new Playworks coach can join us.

Welcome to a great community, a collaborative community. I look forward to connecting with everyone and working together to create even more interesting and motivating numbers throughout the year.

—Principal Takimoto



Welcome, Ms. Winkler!

We're excited to welcome Ms. Carlea Winkler to the Harding family. Ms. Winkler recently received her teaching credential from Dominican University after earning a degree in Environmental Science at UC Berkeley. She joins the faculty as a third-grade teacher.

Ms. Winkler is excited to begin her career at Harding and says, "My favorite thing about teaching is forming positive relationships with students and watching them progress throughout the year."

Her background in science makes it an area she particularly loves teaching, and she capitalizes on the many opportunities for hands-on inquiry and learning that the sciences provide.

In her spare time, Ms. Winkler, a self-proclaimed plant enthusiast, enjoys hiking in the East Bay Regional Parks. She also likes to cook new recipes, even if they don't turn out too well.

Get Out and Play

What's the best time of the school day? Recess, of course! Harding has once again partnered with Playworks to make recess more fun, energetic, safe, and inclusive for everyone.

Playworks, a national nonprofit organization, uses the power of play to transform children's social and emotional health. The program is centered around fun, continuous access to games, and focuses on the joy of playing rather than winning or losing.

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PLAYWORKS



The Harding Carnival is the Dads' Club signature event.

(Dads' Club, continued from page 1)

The Dads' club is hosting the Harding Carnival on Sunday, October 1. Each year, almost 100 parents come together to put on this fun-filled event. The next carnival work party is Saturday, September 9. Come join the fun and help put on an amazing day for our children and community.

For more information about the Dads' Club and details about how you can get involved, contact dadsclub@hardingpta.org.

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Message from the PTA President

Goodness, that went fast! Apparently, the summer just breezed on past us and a new school year is already here. Welcome back.

It's been quite a summer, and the PTA has been working on many things to get ready for this year. You'll notice our new logo and a new look to our publications going forward, as well as updates and a revitalization on our website.

Work on the parking lot solar shades continues apace. We wish the crew the best in finishing up that project. Also, a big thanks to those who helped so much in packing and re-packing the container that the PTA stores gear in on the parking lot.

We have kicked off this year's PTA membership drive. If you have questions, please contact Verna Bowie at membership@hardingpta.org.

We look forward to meeting you as we move into the school year. The first PTA Meeting is September 12 at 7:00 pm. Please come, introduce yourselves, get involved. Together we can create a fun and enriching environment where all of our kids will thrive. Here we go.

—Chad Johnson
Harding PTA President



(Playworks, continued from page 2)

One of the ways they achieve this is through the year-round Playworks Coach model. Through the program, Playworks provides elementary schools with a recess coach, who leads activities and helps fosters greater independence and leadership among students. The Playworks Coach model has been proven to decrease bullying behavior, increase physical activity, and support learning.

Harding is thrilled to welcome Coach Brandon this year. He'll be leading recesses and PE classes one week each month, and helping teachers learn to lead successful PE classes themselves. And he already has a great group of Junior Coaches—fourth, fifth, and sixth graders who are trained to lead and facilitate recess activities using the same Playworks philosophies. Who's up for a game of wall ball? www.playworks.org



Harding PTA

As the school year begins, it's helpful to reflect on the mission of the Harding Parent Teacher Association: *Improve the lives of all Harding children and their families.* The PTA works to do this in two primary ways.

First is through raising money, which the PTA uses to pay for our enrichment programs such as dance, music, and science through gardening, and to provide much needed supplies for all of our Harding teachers.

Second, and equally important, is through our volunteers. Events such as field days and the Fall Carnival couldn't exist without an army of volunteers. However, there are also hundreds of behind-the-scenes hours that help Harding and the PTA fulfill our mission.

Getting involved with the PTA is an easy way to help make Harding a safe, welcoming, and fun place to learn. It's also a way to connect with other Harding families and make school a more memorable experience for all. For a list of current volunteer opportunities, visit www.hardingpta.org/support/volunteer.

2017-18 PTA Executive Board

President: Chad Johnson
Executive VP: Thomas Harrison
VP of Hospitality: Ally Crump
VP of Fundraising: Swee Peck Quek
Treasurer: Vanessa Hill
Recording Secretary: Maggie Whitaker
Financial Secretary: Jason Draut
Auditor: James Duerr
Parliamentarian: Ted Lam

Give a Little, Get a Lot

The annual Giving Campaign is underway! This year we're asking every Harding family to make a donation at whatever level they're comfortable with. It all adds up. And it all goes to help make Harding a richer educational experience for our kids.

You can make a one-time gift or spread out your payments by making a monthly recurring gift.

Look for the gift form in your Wednesday folder. Or go online.

www.razoo.com/organization/Harding

Become a PTA Member

It's fun to participate in PTA-sponsored events and show our children that we're invested in their success, but it's also important that parents' and families' voices are heard when important decisions that affect our school are made. Please join the PTA so that your voice can be heard!

Here's how:

- Fill out the membership envelope. (Look for it in your Wednesday folder.)
- Pay membership fee of \$16 per member. Make checks payable to *Harding PTA*.
- Return to the school office or your classroom teacher.

Where does your \$16 go?

- \$2.25 to the National PTA
- \$2.00 to California PTA
- \$0.40 to 32nd District PTA
- \$1.00 to Bayside PTA
- \$10.35 to Harding PTA to support events and programs

For more information, contact membership@hardingpta.org

Off to a Great Start

The PTA has already hosted some great events. And there's plenty more to come.

Teachers' Lunch

The PTA was happy to host lunch for teachers and staff the week before school started. Teachers enjoyed the delicious flavors of El Cerrito's El Mono, and fueled up for a great 2017-18 year. Here's to a wonderful academic year.

TK/K Potluck

Thanks to all the TK and K families who came out to the potluck and summer playdates. There are so many beautiful faces and families starting and continuing at Harding this year. Let's watch them grow!

Principal's Coffee

Principal Takimoto kicked off the year with a warm welcome and hot beverages. Thanks to Starbucks for their generous donation of coffee and pastries. Don't worry if you missed out on the first one; there will be more Principal Coffees throughout the year.



Welcome to Harding, little one!

Stay Connected

Here's some tips to make sure you stay connected with what's going on at Harding.

Weekly E-News

What: Get weekly updates right in your inbox, usually sent out on Sunday evenings as a helpful reminder that the weekend is over.

How: Subscribe by sending an email to enews@hardingpta.org.

PTA Parents' Calendar

What: Up-to-date details about places to be and people to see.

How: For instructions on how to add the calendar for Gmail, Apple, or other services, see <http://bit.ly/2wjqvGm>.

Wednesday Folders

What: An array of communications from your child's teacher, the school, and the PTA.

How: Unzip your child's backpack and read all about it. Just don't forget to recycle when you're done.

PTA Meetings

What: Come enjoy a live (and sometimes lively) discussion about what the PTA is up to.

How: Just come on by. Meetings are held monthly. Next one is September 12 at 7:00 PM. Childcare is provided, and you don't need to be a paid PTA member to attend (only to vote).

PTA Membership

What: Make your voice heard. Your \$16 membership dues help Harding, plus you'll receive a membership card, some cool perks, and voting rights at PTA meetings.

How: Fill out the membership form you received in your Wednesday folder. Then, return it with paid dues to the office or your child's teacher. Questions? Contact membership@hardingpta.org.

Volunteer

What: Get involved! The PTA always needs help with events, classroom and library support, and behind-the-scenes work.

How: Look for volunteer opportunities through any of the above methods. Or, visit the volunteer page on the Harding website.

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www.elcerritomartialarts.com/program/afterschool

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