



HARDING ELEMENTARY

Winter Trimester Newsletter | 2017-18

Variety Show

The annual Harding Variety Show on January 19 had more variety than ever with over 50 student performers. After a whirlwind week of after-school rehearsals and a daytime run-through, students from every grade wowed a packed house in the Harding auditorium.

Sponsored by the PTA and directed by Eowyn Mader, the show included several dance performances including two groups from Ms. Chang's fifth-grade class dancing to K-pop, a lovely contemporary dance choreographed and performed by two fourth graders, a charming Nepali dance by a group of K-2 girls, and an electric performance by students from Ms. Intano's Deaf and Hard of Hearing class.

Singers included two fourth graders singing "My Favorite Things," a third grader singing "A Friend Like Me" from *Aladdin*, a third grader singing an original song, and a second grader's version of "Tomorrow" from *Annie*. There was also an expertly performed tap dance by a third grader, a first grader playing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" on the water xylophone, a very funny rendition of Monty Python's Black Knight skit, and some cool yo-yo tricks performed by a third grader.

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Nepali dancers

After-School Learning

If you're not already familiar with the Harding After School Enrichment Program (HASEP), you really should know what a great opportunity it is for Harding students.

The program, which is administered by the El Cerrito Recreation Department, offers a wide range of weekly after-school classes at Harding. Three different sessions are offered throughout the school year, with classes ranging from sports and science to art and technology. The Harding PTA has scholarships to help make these classes available to all students. The third session runs March 19 through May 11, and registration information was sent home in a recent Wednesday folder.

For those of you already familiar with HASEP, you may have noticed a change in the Session 3 registration packets. In an effort to reduce paper use, the El Cerrito Recreation Department provided only the HASEP class calendar in the Wednesday folders.

The complete packets—including detailed class descriptions, scholarship information, and paper registration forms—are available on the El Cerrito Recreation Department website, at the El Cerrito Community Center, and on the HASEP Bulletin Board outside of the Harding office.

If you have any questions about HASEP, contact the El Cerrito Recreation Center or the PTA HASEP Committee members, Anne Arkush (annearkush@gmail.com) and Lisa Lorenz (lisa.lorenz@gmail.com).

Message from the Principal

Families are telling us that they want more engagement with classroom instruction and more details about how their children are progressing. The parent education night we held in January was a response to that request. The event, which was very well-attended, was an opportunity for family members to learn about reading, math, and social-emotional skills instruction, discuss creating an inclusive community, and share tech learning and safety information.

Teachers have been expanding their communication with parents through tools such as Remind and Google Classroom, and parents report that they appreciate both the regular, detailed information about what's happening in the classroom and the prompts from teachers about what to ask their children about their time at school. Look for your child's current reading range and instructional goals on second trimester report cards, which will be going home on March 16.

To make the most of the last trimester, help increase your child's ownership of their learning. You can do this by establishing a home routine where your child teaches, explains, or reads something new to you. Additionally, they should be able to talk about an area of challenge and share next steps for working on it. We can't wait to show off at Open House on April 19. Mark this date on your calendar along with Science Fair Family Night on May 24 for great evenings of student learning. Thanks so much for all you do to support your student, their class, and the school.

—Principal Takimoto



The Quinan Street Project

The Quinan Street Project (QSP) is a Pinole-based nonprofit that provides accessible visual and performing arts education to the West Contra Costa Unified School District and surrounding communities.

Harding is pleased to welcome QSP for a 12-week program, Drama in the Classroom, which began in January for all classes. Each week, all students participate in a weekly class with QSP Master Teaching Artist, Amelia Adams. The TK and kindergarten students have 30-minute classes, while the first- through sixth-grade students have 50-minute classes.

Lesson topics include building an ensemble, debating power dynamics and status in stories, and studying world theater and storytelling. Students are exposed to stories and texts that reflect the diversity of our community and give them the opportunity to have their voices heard.

The fourth through sixth grades are getting familiar with Lava Pit, a game that engages the students' imaginations and helps to build ensemble. The first through third grades are enjoying a game called Wax Museum, which teaches the difference between pantomime and tableau. And our TK and kindergarten classes are having fun with Magic Rocks, which teaches our youngest actors how to shape their bodies into different poses.

Anna Smith, Executive Director of QSP, wrote the curriculum and explains the program as one that "engages the body, voice, and imagination to dissect and act out stories." She also mentions that students are given the tools to critically analyze characters, story arcs, and settings in literature. The program combines California Visual and Performing Arts standards for theater with Common Core English Language Arts Standards to help facilitate experiential learning in children.

QSP is dedicated to igniting confidence, literacy, and creativity in students, and the organization does so through classroom residencies, summer camps, and after-school workshops. For more information, visit www.QuinanStreet.org.

Creating Lifelong Readers

The second annual Harding read-a-thon just wrapped up, and it was once again a huge success. While the read-a-thon served as a fundraising opportunity, it was much more than your typical pledge-focused, money-raising campaign. The read-a-thon was all about fostering a love for reading. Over the week-long event, students were encouraged to read, both in the classroom and at home, and really got excited about books.

Ms. Kang's kindergartners enjoyed many books, including classics such as the Miss Nelson series and the Black Lagoon series. In recognition of various reading celebrations (Read Across America, Dr. Seuss's birthday, and the Harding read-a-thon), Ms. Gonzalez's fourth- through sixth-grade prep classes revisited Dr. Seuss classics, such as *And to Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street*.

Even after the read-a-thon, reading remains top of mind. Superintendent Duffy recently awarded Harding a \$40,000 grant as a result of our willingness to begin or expand implementation of Teachers College Units of Study for Reading. Thirteen Harding teachers volunteered to be pioneers for this innovative curriculum, which uses a workshop model for reading and writing. Implementation work is being monitored and documented for student response and a guide for expansion to all classrooms and other schools. The grant money is being used to build up classroom libraries, which is an integral part of the curriculum's reading workshops.

Finally, don't forget to expand your own home libraries during the Scholastic Book Fair, which will be held this year from April 16 through April 19, including the evening of Open House. Many of the books are available at discounted prices. Plus, Harding receives half of all proceeds, which are used to purchase more books for the library.

Message from the PTA President

Spring tidings, everyone. At least, I think that's the season that's coming around. It's kind of hard to tell these days. Nonetheless, I hope you all had a great winter and are ready for longer days and more green things. Speaking of which, the PTA is pleased to announce that we have the green light to hire our new Garden Coordinator. His name is Bryan and we are finalizing his schedule so he and the students can start working in the garden in March.

We hope to work with the Dads' Club to organize a cleanup in the garden before long, so watch the e-newsletter for details about a spring cleaning in the yard. The Dads' Club is also planning an outdoor movie night to be held in the spring (once it warms up enough), so more details about that will be coming.

Lastly, I wanted to make sure everyone knows that the PTA nominating committee is at work reviewing the PTA Board positions for next year. Some of the positions have term limits, so we need to fill those roles. And there are a few committee positions that need filling, as well. If you've been thinking about getting involved with the PTA, join us at the March 13 or April 9 PTA meetings to throw your proverbial hat into the ring. We can *a/ways* use the help. More information is on the Harding website.

We're all looking forward to a fun-filled spring season, and we appreciate all the hard work and generosity on behalf of Harding, the PTA, and mostly, the students.

—Chad Johnson
Harding PTA President



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Musicians were also on full display, perhaps due in part to Harding's band program, which begins in fourth grade. The night featured flute, violin, and guitar performances. And piano was on full display, with seven performances in styles ranging from classical to blues.

This year's sixth-grade cohort, which has been active in the variety show over the past years, made the most out of their final performance. We want to wish them well as they take their talents to middle school next year. Sixth graders who performed include Isaac Satzman and Romy Weitzer (saxophone and drums); Rayna Pletcher (clarinet); Liam Africa, Anai Brown, Kai Hargrove, Stella Hauser, and Neel Chandran (separate piano performances); Max Mankita (stand-up act); Emma Ruth, Maeve Urban, and Judith Keig (separate song performances, with Judith also playing the piano); Josephine Ransdell (Monty Python skit); and Isaac Satzman, William Zwiebach, Arvid Pokhrel, and Emma Ruth (A Commercial Break skit). The show concluded with Romy exhorting the whole audience to breathe together at the end of the poem "Poet Breathe Now" by Adam Gottlieb. And thanks to our sixth-grade emcees (Sophia Nguyen, Caleb Soltero, and Arvid Pokhrel) and stage manager (Kai Hargrove). What a night it was!

Spring Auction

The Harding Spring Auction is right around the corner—Thursday, April 19, to be exact. This year's auction promises something for everyone with an eclectic array of items—from local dining and performing arts to family outings and activities, and some fantastic merchandise.

The event will once again be paired with Open House. So after your kids wow you with the great work they've been doing all year, you can wow them with your generosity—and take something special home, too. Keep an eye out for details in your Wednesday folder.

And no Harding Spring Auction is complete without an array of class projects, so be sure to check out these one-of-a-kind works of art that are lovingly created by students.

Last year's auction brought in close to \$10,000 and helped fund programs in music, art, and science, as well as provided money for library books, classroom supplies, and field trips. Without the PTA and events like this, these programs could not exist.

If you would like to donate an item, have a special connection with a local business, or if you can volunteer on the night, please contact Verna Bowie (verna.bowie@hardingpta.org).

Please note that there will be no raffle this year.

100 Days and Counting

The kindergarten and first-grade classes continued their annual tradition of celebrating the 100th day of school on January 31. While some might think they're just looking for an excuse to party, the classes actually take the opportunity to learn all about the number 100. In particular, each student makes a project with 100 of some item, which is a great chance for them to not only practice their counting, but also to learn about estimating. For example, do you know what you could build with 100 Lego pieces? Or how long a necklace you could make with 100 Cheerios? After the 100th day of school, Harding's youngest students can answer these questions and many more.

