



**PLURALISTIC  
SCHOOL**

*where knowledge meets imagination*

Winter '06-07



**In Service of Others**

# the periscope



**The Periscope**

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## Parent Perspective

### In Service of Our Children

# Creating a rich learning environment

by Cathy Watts, *Parents Guild Coordinator*

**How do PS#1 parents volunteer at school? Let me count the ways... driving on a fieldtrip, dropping in for DEAR time, dishing out Hot Lunch, chairing the Yearbook Committee, checking math facts...**

[The list is long and varied.]

This sharing of our time and talents in our children's school enables us to be active partners in their growth. It allows us to build relationships with those friends, teachers, librarians, and mentors influencing their lives. Classroom volunteering provides a glimpse into the curriculum, classroom dynamics and social world that can be difficult to fully grasp from the outside. This insight into our children's experience allows us to build on their learning experience and to fully support them in their journey.

**PS#1 parents also pour their heart and soul into volunteer activities outside the classroom. We emcee at the Book Festival. We share a song, a poem or a dance. In doing so, we illustrate to our children that in life we are members of a community, working together to achieve a common goal. We each play a role in orchestrating events and creating a rich learning environment.**

By volunteering at the school, we have modeled for our children how to shape our community and become an integral part of it. Our children, in turn, gain the confidence to express themselves in this community and make the school their own.

And along the way the parents and children alike have made friendships that will last a lifetime!

**The Evolution of Learning at PS#1** We're looking back at our history, and looking forward to the next 35 years.

**Alumni Perspective** Our graduates address current families, in their own words.

**Curriculum Connections** Wait until you see what your kid's class is up to. We're talking WOW factor!

**Inside the Auction** Not to be missed, our Annual Auction has surprises in store.

# Rhythm



One of the beauties of running a school is that, unlike many jobs, there is a definite beginning, middle, and end. When I moved to California from the East Coast, I missed the seasons of the year but the annual calendar of a school serves as a worthy substitute. We start anew each year with new ideas, new students and families, some changes, renewed spirit, and a passion for what is to come. Five-year-old students begin the cycle that the most recent group of twelve year olds and their families have just completed. The annual cycle is wonderfully restorative. It also is calming; name a month and I can tell you what the major foci, issues, and concerns are likely to be.

Finding a rhythm in life is one of the keys to success and accomplishment. I doubt that when we first opened the doors of PS#1, I would have suggested to anyone that I would someday have the opportunity to write about “the next 35 years.” My wife Ellie and I wanted to make a school where every child would be valued and recognized for her uniqueness, learn basic skills, delight in discovery and develop positive attitudes about life and learning. We knew that elementary schools worked best when they were small and when parents and teachers built a community together. We knew we were committed to pluralism in all of its forms. And we knew that the ‘PS’ in our name could also stand for Personal Success and Significance in children’s lives. None of that has changed.

What has changed is that the foundation is so firmly established now. We have a history of success dating back to 1971. What is past is prologue. There is no limit to what we build from this day forward— everything is in place to make the next 35 years a hugely successful chapter in the life of our school.

As the New Year begins, I urge you to make your mark, as the students featured in this issue have done. Everyone whose life PS#1 touches has the ability to make a change for the better... for our students, for the community, for us all.

## Service-Learning

**From passive learners to engaged problem solvers**

by Elizabeth Ostrom,  
Curriculum Coordinator

**The term “service-learning” is buzzed about in educational circles and communities, but what is service-learning and what is its true purpose? More than volunteering or helping out, it is an educational approach that combines community service with academic study to enhance learning, teach civic responsibility and to strengthen students’ connection to their community.**

**The real benefit of service-learning is the opportunity it provides for students to move from being passive learners to engaged and excited problem solvers. Students grapple with real-life challenges, identify issues and concerns through reading, discussion and research, consider options, and work toward possible solutions. The goal is to strengthen student voice by involving children at the outset, honoring their questions and ideas, guiding them to appropriate resources, and allowing them to create a viable response. Students experience what it means to collaborate on a project that makes a difference in the lives of others.**

**Turn to the Curriculum Connections column for a glimpse at how PS#1 children put service-learning into practice. I think you’ll agree that our students are well on their way to becoming responsible citizens of our world.**

### **Recommended Reading:**

Want to learn more about service-learning? Visit the National Youth Leadership Council website, [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org), or the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) website at [www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org). For more information, the following books are helpful: *Teaching Young Children Through Service*, by Ann Shoemaker and *Getting Started in Service-Learning*, by Carole Klopp, Joan Liptrot, and Kristine Klopp.

# Taking care of our campus

by Jennine Rodriguez and Jaime Patane,  
Youngers Teachers



As part of social studies last year, our class talked about “making change.” We studied people, such as Ruby Bridges (one of the first children to integrate an elementary school in the south), who helped change something in their communities. As a class we brainstormed things that we could do at PS#1 to make change and to help our school be a better place for everyone.

Some children in our class had noticed that there was often trash left out on both the Euclid and 12th street yards after lunch. We first did a little research. Some students counted recycling bins and some counted trash cans on both yards. We discovered that there was a need for more of each on both yards because some of the bins were overflowing! Students worked with partners to write letters to Joel, Maggie, Wendell and Julio to ask for more bins and to have them placed in easily accessible areas. You’ll notice this year that there are more recycling bins on the yards and many are right next to classroom doors for quick access!

After the research, we asked other classes for help during what we called “Help the Community Day.” We spent one Friday after lunch collecting all of the trash and recycling. We observed recycling bins and bags of trash to see if items were placed in the proper containers, discussed our findings and then reported to the community at our class Circle Time. The children created a skit to act out what students should do at lunch, including not letting their trash blow away on the yard. The purpose of this service-learning project was to inform the rest of the school about how to take better care of our campus. We succeeded!

Our class eventually decided that there will always be a need for “Help the Community Day,” and agreed that this day should become a Youngers tradition each year. So be on the look out for more hard work coming from J/J’s class this year!

# Spreading the truth slick advertising

by Louise Everett and Hala Innab,  
Middles Teachers

Ever wondered what’s in that bowl of cornflakes? Just ask the kids in our class. Through Media Literacy lessons, the students have been learning about what goes into making a commercial look and sound so good. In the case of that bowl of cereal, each flake is handpicked for perfection, and instead of milk, how about some white glue on top? (Regular milk shows up looking flat and bluish, and it makes the cereal soggy). The kids had fun working in teams to create their own commercial-ready bowls of flakes, then designing slogans to sell their product.

So, how does this tie in with service-learning? Very simply; we plan to educate the other students at PS#1 about the ways commercials use tricks to make products appear better than they could ever be in real life. Through visual and sound effects, plus the persuasive use of words, commercials can get you to believe that toy trucks really can perform “killer stunts”. The kids in our class are committed to learning how and why these tricks are used, then passing that information on to their unsuspecting peer consumers. The students will be working in teams to write articles about different aspects of advertising.

Look out for L/H’s class publication, coming soon. It’s quite an eye-opener!



behind

# Curriculum Connections



In Service of the Earth

## Students empowered to reduce waste

by Abbie Perttula and Billy Huynh,  
Olders Teachers

Do you know how composting, vermiculture, and recycling are connected? It's the path, littered with garbage, which led our class to a noteworthy service-learning project.

The first steps in our adventure were taken during Science class. We set up a worm bin to compost the green waste generated from lunches. We learned firsthand how worms eat our garbage and, in return, create "worm tea" and rich soil ("worm tea" is an organic fertilizer derived from worm castings). On a field study to Stunt Ranch in Topanga Canyon, a reserve that educates the public about resource management, pollution, and the environment. When we returned to PS#1, we noticed that many trashcans were filled with plastic water bottles left over from Hot Lunch, some still filled with water. Our newly empowered environmentalists were incensed about this mismanagement of resources.

The class decided to do something about the problem, so they created a plan to collect all of the plastic at school and redeem it at the Santa Monica Recycling Center (we were pleased to receive \$21.86 for the first batch of plastic bottles). We purchased watering cans so that the unwanted water could be used to irrigate the pots and gardens around school. We toured the recycling center and everyone was amazed to learn that America is the best in the world at burying garbage; we fill up more land with trash than any other country. We'd like to change that.

Our Plastic Recycling Project is a yearlong service-learning experience. It integrates science, math, social studies, and language arts in a high interest project. It empowers children to be critical thinkers, stewards of the Earth and to make a difference in their world. The proceeds will give us an opportunity to learn about charitable organizations, as we plan to research which agency is the best place to donate the money earned from our recycling efforts. We've turned a sow's ear into a silk purse, as the saying goes. And all of us are richer for it.

### Word Power:

#### tr.v. **com·post**·ed, **com·post**·ing, **com·posts**

1. To fertilize with a mixture of decaying organic matter.
2. To convert (vegetable matter) to compost.

#### n. **ver·mi·cul·ture**

1. Using specially bred earthworms, esp. to aerate soil and convert organic matter into compost; also called vermicomposting.





# Making Memories

By Heather Kallemeyn

Three spectacular events in September brought so many of us together and helped us kick off another year at PS#1 with energy and enthusiasm. First, on a picture perfect evening, our school community met in Clover Park for the annual **Back to School Picnic**. We reconnected with friends after the summer break, introduced ourselves to families new to PS#1, and simply enjoyed seeing all of the smiling faces of the children together again. Thanks to our “hostesses”, Carrie Henley, Kim Hamer and Kendra King, who planned this relaxing evening, and to all of our parents who brought delicious homemade dishes and treats.

The second event, co-chaired by Shaun Bornstein and Christine Champion, was “**Make New Friends Day**.” This very special morning brought our brand new students to campus, to ease them into their surroundings before the first day of school. Joining them were our second-year youngers, practicing their mentor skills as they spent the morning showing their new classmates the lay of the land. They worked together on crafts and art projects, laying a foundation for all they will learn and discover together throughout the year.

And what parent can’t use a little extra caffeine to kick-off that first hectic day of school? At our **First Day Coffee**, brought to us by Susan Hayden and Rae Sanchini, amazing ice-blendeds, cappuccinos, and lattes gave us that extra bounce in our step as we spent the morning chatting with each other about the exciting year ahead. Members of the Parents Guild Executive Board were on hand to welcome everyone back; we nibbled on bagels and fruit and learned about the many ways to get involved at PS#1.

With the school year kicked off on just the right note, the fall always turns into a busy time around PS#1. This year was no exception. During our Third Annual **State of the School Night**, Joel warmly welcomed parents to the beginning of another year and mused that the PS in PS#1 could stand for Personal Significance, Personal Satisfaction, and Personal Success. Alan Wertheimer, our Annual Giving chair extraordinaire, explained that the monies raised from this campaign help to sustain our Financial Aid program, cover operating costs, and provide the many exciting “extras” that make PS#1 a singular elementary school. 100% of our Board, Faculty and Staff have already pledged their support!

In October, we ate our way through another **Father’s Break-**

**fast**, led by Grill Master Brent Shapiro. PS#1 fathers do the bulk of the work, but our entire community (moms and kids, too!) pitched in to make enough food for a small village. The morning was filled with laughter and fun, as the kids showed their dads a thing or two about their skills in a rollicking round of putt-putt. And of course, who could forget the Animal Guys? They brought slippery snakes, creep-crawly creatures, and one of the largest turtles ever seen on the 12th Street Yard.

Then, in November, we “Discovered the Magic of Reading” at our **Annual Book Fair and Festival**. Orchestrated by Chairs, Bo Kwon, Lily Ota, and Olivia Riopelle, this was a fair and festival that dazzled and delighted. There was story-telling, lively music, and more food, games and crafts than we could shake a broomstick (or magic wand) at! Kids were treated to a performance by a magician who thrilled and amazed. Not wanting to leave us completely bewitched, he even shared some of his magic secrets and then sent the kids out to decorate their own magic wands. They may very well become the next Maestro Magicians!

Finally, in December, students, parents and staff came together for an afternoon of festive feasting at our **Annual Dishiversity Day**. This Global Feast, chaired by Karen Biers and Diane Solomon, celebrates the diverse cultures that are represented in our school community. Families prepare dishes from their own family cookbooks and come together on our Euclid yard to share traditions and learn more about each other. We gather together at one figurative table to celebrate our individual identities within our inclusive school family.

And in an effort to share some of the abundance we have all witnessed this fall here at PS#1, our **Community Service Holiday Hearts Toy Drive** was met with an overwhelming response. The generosity of our families absolutely shined as they bought and wrapped gifts for kids at the Centro de Niños and St. John’s Well Child and Family Center. Thanks go to our Community Service committee, Liz Waldman, Christine Mourad and Laurie Seplow, for organizing the drive and to all of our families for reaching out to help those in need. What a great way to celebrate the holiday season and a fitting end to the first half of another fantastic school year here at PS#1!

# Stewards of our planet

By Liz and John Waldman

From the local, to the national, to the global, PS#1 is a school with a strong commitment to, and tradition of, community service. Through the course of the year, our students and their families participate in a wide variety of activities dedicated to significantly offering meaningful support to those in need.

Collection drives of books, toys, clothing and backpacks are typified by bins and boxes overflowing with quality donated items. Each month one of our classes prepares lunches for a local shelter in our pack-a-sack program and each year the entire student body participates in a Thanksgiving meal preparation for Step Up On Second. Shortly thereafter our Holiday Hearts Drive fulfills the wish of a gift for up to two hundred children. This program was started by PS#1 parent Katie Moss, and has grown school wide to benefit children at two facilities serving low-income Los Angeles families. In the spring, generous volunteers prepare a dinner for our neighbors at Turning Point, a transitional living agency.

We also respond to sudden, often unforeseen catastrophes as when one of our classes created first aid kits for victims of the tsunami and when our entire school partnered with a school in Biloxi, Mississippi that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Last year students in one of our Olders classes, spearheaded by Jonathan Feldman, another PS#1 parent, participated in a postcard writing campaign orchestrated by Human Rights Watch to encourage our government to take action in Darfur.

Our school does an outstanding job preparing our students for life academically and socially. Where we also excel is in preparing our children to be empathetic, responsible citizens who are, and will continue to be, stewards of their communities and of the planet.

## The PS#1 Alumni Association



## Alumni Corner

**Jason Doyle** ('95) graduated from the US Naval Academy, Annapolis in 2005 and received his wings as a Naval Flight Officer, this past September, at least a whole year earlier than scheduled.

**James Larson** ('03) is in the 10th grade at Crossroads. He's the Co-President of the 10th Grade class, a member of the Student Council, and spent the summer doing community service as an Assistant Coach for the Westside Special Olympics Cycling, Bowling and Power lifting Teams. Last year he received an award for excellence in Greek for his work on the National Greek Exam, ran the 400 and 1600-meter relays for the Crossroads Varsity track team, and earned a 4.0 GPA. James enjoys surfing, football, and is writing for the Crossroads newspaper this year.

**Anna Rabinovitch** ('97) is finishing her last year at Wesleyan University in CT as a film major. While enjoying her classes, Anna has been appointed to the Film Board, writes reviews for the school newspaper, and works as a writing tutor. She remains in close contact with her PS#1 friends, Sara DuPont and Kate Rutkin.

**Elana Schwarzman** ('96) graduated from USC with a Communications Major and Theatre minor degree, and is pursuing a career in Acting. Elana was recently in Layon Gray's play 8 Shades at the Avery Schreiber Theater in North Hollywood. Elana is very busy enjoying her work, her friends and this next chapter in life.

We've heard **Avery Miller** ('01) received the Sunshine League Outstanding Sportsmanship Award last year. Avery is in her senior year at Marlborough.

A sophomore at Hamilton College, **Alexa Schwarzman** ('99), spent the summer at Hamilton doing chemistry research in the field of breast cancer treatment. She is also a campus EMT. She's busy with friends, traveling (a special love for Scotland), and school!

**Nick Rabinovitch** ('00) is in his freshman year at the Annenberg School at USC. He is interested in journalism, communications, and social research. Very open to new experiences, he lived with a family in Japan a few summers back (he studies Japanese and has an affinity to the culture), helped build and worked at a school in the Dominican Republic last summer, and recently explored Europe with friends.



**Catherine Murphy** ('80s AfterCare Director) Now residing in Portland, Catherine continues her work with various non-profit agencies, and also remains quite active in her church. The whole family stopped by to lend a hand in painting the new Field of Dreams mural. (Pictured with Abbie, Joel and her family)

## 2006-2007 Board of Directors

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Save The Date!

## 2006-2007 Annual Giving Update

Having raised over \$315,000 toward our goal of \$450,000, the Annual Giving Campaign has really taken off. 100% of our Board, Faculty and Staff have already pledged or donated, and current family donations have been arriving daily. We rely on your generous contributions to provide extra benefits to our teachers, create special programs for our students, and meet our yearly operating budget. Furthermore, since 20% of our parent body receives financial assistance, your gift assures the socio-economic diversity that makes our school a truly unique and wonderful institution.

Want to join in the spirit of giving at PS#1? Please contact Lisa Wilson at [lisa@psone.org](mailto:lisa@psone.org) or call 310.394.1313, x109, to make your contribution today. All gifts are fully tax-deductible, as allowed by law.

<b>December</b>	11-15	<b>Conference Days</b> Noon dismissal, childcare available
	14	<b>Last School Tour of the year</b> , 8:45-10:45am
	20	<b>Holiday Performance</b> Noon dismissal, no childcare
	21	<b>Winter Break Begins</b>
<b>January</b>	3	<b>School Resumes</b>
	12	<b>Common Ground Potluck</b> , 6pm
	15	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b> No school, no childcare available
	19	<b>Financial Aid applications due</b> for all re-enrolling students
	25	<b>School Tour</b> , 8:45-10:45am
	29	<b>Re-enrollment tuition deposit due</b>
<b>February</b>	4	<b>Turning Point Shelter</b> <b>Community Service Dinner</b> , 5-7pm
	16	<b>Grandparents and Special Friends Day</b>
	19-23	<b>President's Break</b> No school, no childcare available

### Current Annual Giving Participation by Class:

T/N	64%
J/J	60%
L/H	72%
L/A	63%
A/B	73%
C/M	50%
J/B	63%

1971

PS#1 Time Capsule

**1971**  
PS#1 opened its doors with 6 teachers and just 12 students.

**1984**  
We hold our first benefit Movie Screening. The flick PS#1 fans flocked to? Ghostbusters.

**2006**  
PS#1's award-winning campus featured in the April issue of Architecture magazine.

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2006



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