

# ***MAYER'S MONTHLY MEMO SPRING 2009***

## ***BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LUNCH PERIOD***

During the past two years, we have done several things to improve our lunch climate including hiring more support staff and bringing in Coach Jason to organize games and a Junior Coaching program. This year, because of having three separate recesses, we have also had a higher adult to student ratio on the playground. With problems on the playground down, we are now able to look at other opportunities for teaching students valuable life skills. To that end, we have ramped up our Salad Bar, which we have every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. It provides an incredible selection of healthy foods for only one dollar. Additionally, we are beginning a food scrap recycling program, in which students will compost their lunch trays and throw food scraps into a compost pile in an effort to create an almost completely free garbage lunch. We are looking for parent volunteers/leaders for next year so that we can continue the program.

As another component to an improved lunch period we are going to experiment with a recently new idea called the "Reverse Lunch Recess". In a "Reverse Lunch Recess" the students play first for 10-15 minutes, and then they will eat for the second 15-20 minutes. It has been shown that when students play before they eat, they generally eat more, have less food waste, and go back to class a bit calmer because their games ended 15 minutes before returning to class instead of running and sweating immediately before returning to class. We are not sure how it will turn out, but we are excited about this experiment and, if it works, we will use it next year.

## ***MISTAKES = INFORMATION***

Dave Nettell has been working with our students the past few months, coming into each class twice. One of the key things that Dave teaches all of us is that **Mistakes = Information**. This is a simple philosophy, but profound. When our children or we make mistakes there are two ways to interpret this: 1. It is a bad thing and we blew it; or 2. That we made a mistake and we have an opportunity to learn something from it. The truth is that people who are outstanding in their field or in a particular hobby or interest have made thousands of mistakes and learned from those mistakes and that is how one becomes outstanding at something. If we don't take chances, then we often don't learn anything. Ask your child if they have any Dave Nettell stories or what they learned from his class visits.

## ***PCAD Multicultural Celebration***

We had a terrific "Multi Cultural" Night, on April 2, sponsored by PCAD. The Chabot Band (The Rockin' Bobcats) played, and many Certificates were awarded to students for their achievements. The evening honored both the Saturday School participants as well as the students of *FastForward*, our new computer software and language program that provides foundational and reading comprehension support. Miss Bermeo and Coach Jason facilitate *FastForward* for our school. Currently, about 40 students participate in our before and after school acceleration

programs with *FastForward*. Ms. Brehler and Miss Carrow are teaching Saturday School. I want to acknowledge the 12 families who have committed to coming every Saturday for the whole spring. I would also like to say a special thank you to Amana Harris, who started PCAD and the Saturday School program. The advancement of the kids who participate in the Saturday School program is being noted on the District level. We are very proud of the program, and plan on continuing it next year and into the future.

## **Reaching out to All Families and Closing the Achievement Gap**

At Chabot we are continually trying to find ways to support all students and families. One of my observations during the past four years is that there are always a significant number of families who for various reasons never get completely involved in our community. While we know that all parents are very involved with providing their child with support, recent studies show that when students see their parents visibly participating within the school community and building relationships within the school community and with their teacher, as well as providing support with homework, students do significantly better in school.

With this in mind, we are looking to find more engaging and exciting ways to provide community involvement, including: education events, helping with homework nights; community “Pot Lucks”; and Math, Reading, and Writing evenings. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, right before Open, Jessica Cannon and Celia Bermeo will be facilitating a focus group of families to share ideas to make Chabot more inclusive and responsive to all our families, especially those that have not been able to participate during this past year. If you have ideas about this focus group please contact Ms. Cannon.

The SCC and PTA have been looking at more and more ways to support all families, and we will most likely expand our Bobcat Day in the fall to become a type of Orientation/Match up new families with a buddy family. If you are interested in this critical issue, please contact me or consider becoming part of the SSC.

***Remember to tell your kids: learn a lot and have fun! Bobcat Pride Day is the last Friday of every month and we are encouraging students to wear something that says Chabot or is Purple and Yellow, our school colors.***



**Jonathan Mayer, Principal  
Anthony Chabot Elementary  
6686 Chabot Road  
Oakland, CA 94618  
510/879-1060**

Home of the Chabot Bobcats    **OPEN HOUSE – May 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-7:30**