



October 2009

Nicasio School News

From the Principal

We had a great turnout for Back-to-School Night thanks, in part, to several parents and middle school students who volunteered their time to provide babysitting in the library. Several new items were unveiled at this event, including a Parent/Student Handbook and the school's website.

Be sure to bookmark this website: www.nicasioschool.org. Here, you will find general information about the school and its various programs, forms and documents, calendars, newsletters, a staff directory, links to the School Board and Foundation, and much more. The website is still being developed and new information is continually being added. So, check back regularly.

The school year is already well underway. **October 2nd** marks the mid-term of first trimester. In order to keep parents informed about their child's progress in school, progress reports will be sent home via Thursday envelopes on **October 8th**. These reports will be issued for students who are (or are at risk of) falling below academic standards in one or more subject areas. Upon completion of the first trimester, all students will receive a report card in late November/early December.

Have a great month!

Christy Stocker



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6/7/8 Science Project Wows Assembly Audience



A volcanic eruption caused shock waves of glee during a school assembly led by Mr. W. and his Grade 6/7/8 class on Sept. 23rd.



Middle school class prepares volcano for an "eruptive" demonstration at school assembly.

42-Point Gain Results in Record API for Nicasio School

Nicasio School Achieves API Score of 907

by Board Trustee Chris Mothersill

The State of California released its **2009 API results** on September 14th, with Nicasio School achieving a score of **907** – the highest in the school's history.



Nicasio School saw its score soar by a whopping 42 points over 2008 results – representing the fourth highest increase among Marin County's elementary schools. API, or Academic Performance Index, is compiled from the annual STAR test results of students at each school and is designed to measure a school's progress in academic performance across a variety of academic measures. The State of California views a score above 800 as meeting academic standards, with 790 representing the current state average for grades 2 – 6. Marin County's elementary school average was approximately 850 in 2009.

API scores will vary from year to year and, as school with a limited student body, we are likely to experience more variation than others. Nevertheless, this year's results are something to be extremely proud of - particularly having been achieved in a year where the school underwent a number of changes including moving to a new three classroom configuration. Hats off to the **school administration and teachers!!!**

There must be something very good going on during those Wacky Wednesdays and minimum Fridays, in addition to excellence in the classroom. But most of all, **congratulations** to all of our **students** and their **families** – after all, these are **YOUR** achievements!!

REMINDER

School Photos

Wed., October 14th

Send order form & payment to school with your child on Picture Day.



Parent Club Happenings

by Tory Grady, Parent Club Team Leader

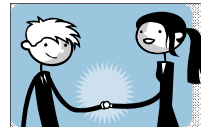
We want to extend a huge thank you to **Evangelina Saldana** for coordinating the **Back-to-School Night** refreshments. With the help of **Raquel Cervantes, Lucienne Meckfessel, Karen Baldwin, Leanne Greentree** and **Marnie Jackson**, Evangelina created a beautiful array of hors d'oeuvres and other refreshments. Great job, Evangelina!!

We also want to extend thanks to our fearless and tireless crew who watched the children in the library during the event – **Kate & Sara Anderson, Alex Alvarado, Mary Jane Pasha** and **Leanne Greentree**. And importantly, thanks to **Russell Pasha-Maxstadt**, and **Maxwell** and **Finnegan Barr** for cleaning up without being asked.



Parent volunteer Jesse Kuhn assists 3/4/5 class with the planting of fall crops.

Students Recognized for Random Acts of Friendship



Congratulations to **Ellierose Jackson** and **Adhoah Cinnidhlaoch-McCoinnich** who were each awarded certificates at a weekly school-wide assembly in recognition of their exemplary “acts of friendship” toward fellow students. Thanks, Adhoah and Ellierose, for being such great role models!

A Big Thank You to 3/4/5 Parent Helpers

by Elaine Doss

For the past few weeks, I have been singing the praises of my students’ parents who volunteered for 22 out of 25 job opportunities on **Back-to-School** evening! Never before have I had such a vigorous and generous response. Parent volunteers have signed up for jobs that match their expertise, skills and abilities, busy schedules, penchants and possibly even jobs that they find boring and tedious, but they are willing to do just to help me out and thereby enhance the educational program in the Third, Fourth and Fifth grade classroom.

Jesse Kuhn, as our class Gardener, has already begun work. Recently, he took half the class outside to the garden to plant onions, carrots, broccoli, basil and spinach seeds, which they watered and covered under shade cloth. They also transplanted seedlings donated to our class by **Marnie Jackson**. The next week, the other half of the class worked with Jesse to plant our second bed. During Jesse’s third week we will plant our third bed. Thank you so much, Jesse (and **Laurie Kuhn**, too, for volunteering him).



Foundation Corner

by Whit Jackson, Foundation President

The Foundation is off to a great year already. Many families have already made their pledge for the **Annual Family Giving Campaign**. Remember, our goal is to have 100% participation from school families.

Without every family's financial support, we face tough choices in terms of enrichment programs at Nicasio School. The Foundation gives approximately \$1,000 per year per student to the school to cover art, music, foreign language, student council, special programs, etc. Our goal is to raise \$650 per child through the family giving campaign. Your participation, at whatever level you can manage, is an investment in your

kids. A big **thank you** to the following families for already making a pledge for the 2009-2010 year:

- ◆ **Blantz-McArthur**
- ◆ **Jacksons (Marnie and Whit)**
- ◆ **Jensen**
- ◆ **Pasternak**
- ◆ **Snell**

If you need more information on the Foundation, please check out our web site at www.nicasiosf.org.

On behalf of the all-volunteer Foundation Board, thank you for being an active and supportive school community. Here's to another great school year!