

SUNRIDGE BULLETIN

JULY 10, 2009

SUNRIDGE SCHOOL

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CALENDAR

Charter Council Meetings:

Monday, July 13, 9am-12:00 noon

Location: 4444 Hillview Way, R. Park

Friday, July 31, 10am-4pm

Location to be determined

Sunday, August 9, 11:00-6:00:

8th grade car wash at 76 Station on
corner of 116 and Occidental Rd.

See article on page 3.

Prepare-the-School Work Parties

Saturdays, August 15 and 22

Tuesday, August 18, 6:00-9:00pm:

Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday, August 26

1st Day of 2009-10 school year

Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday

First week: all Early Release Days

Monday, September 7:

School Closed for Labor Day Holiday

Saturday, September 12, 2:00 – 6:00pm

Back to School Party 2009

Lots of News in this Summer Bulletin—Please Read!

New Changes on the Horizon *from Mark Rice*

As we look back on each school year I have a tendency to notice what didn't go so well or what could have been done better. I try to balance this with remembering with appreciation all the wonderful things our school does so well and with so much heart. When I have enough time to really reflect on what we are all creating here together, I get excited about how those bumps and falls along the way can be translated into new ideas, new capacities, and new directions, as we learn from our mistakes and commit to continuous improvement.

This year had its share of bumps and falls, but I have no doubt that our school will continue to grow in strength and skill in every important area of need. Here is a quick summary of some of the work now being done to keep SunRidge moving forward into the future:

• **TRIBES training and New Discipline Procedures**

Our social emotional learning committee completed a year of work and the results are exciting: beginning this fall, all SunRidge teachers and administrators will receive 4 full days of training in the TRIBES process, a comprehensive program that builds teachers' abilities to create healthy classroom communities with their students. Along with this exciting new program, the social emotional learning committee has also recommended some sweeping changes to our discipline procedures so that they are clearer, more positive, and more effective. These changes are currently being put into a final working draft, and will be implemented as a working model when school reopens. Stay tuned for news on these changes as soon as they are ready for distribution.

• **New Focus on Healthy Communication**

A new committee arising from the Parent Council has been meeting to look at how we can develop a healthier school culture in the realm of communication and conflict resolution. This committee is meeting during the summer and will be presenting its statement of intent and purpose to the Charter Council in September.

• **Middle School Development and Support**

Plans for how to better address identified middle school needs have been developing since March. This summer, the Charter Council will devote focused time to review our Middle School program and make changes that will strengthen it. This coincides with the hiring of two new middle school teachers, Christopher McRee in 6th grade, and Dominic Yarbrough in 7th grade. Both teachers just completed the 6-day training at Rudolf Steiner College and are excited about joining our Middle School team. Also attending the middle school training at RS College this year were Mark Rice and Gene Gallock. Gene is a retired Science teacher and teacher trainer who will be providing ongoing mentoring and support to our new teachers this year. Mr. McRee, who has taken a class from 1st through 8th grade at a Waldorf school, will also be providing mentoring support for Mr. Yarbrough, who is new to Waldorf. Other parts of our new team support model will be developed over the summer, as will new programmatic ideas designed to make our middle school program more cohesive and effective.

More on next page...

• New Curriculum Standards

In May, the Charter Council approved new curriculum standards for all grades. These standards reflect the State Standards, but are grade-adjusted to make them correspond better with the grades in which the Waldorf curriculum teaches each curricular area or skill. These standards will be implemented beginning in the fall and should provide everyone with a clearer picture of what should be taught in each grade.

Even as we are forced to tighten our belt in response to funding cutbacks, there is much we can do make SunRidge the best it can be. I look forward to working together with our community of faculty, parents, and students to keep SunRidge alive and responsive to the heart of a Waldorf-inspired, high quality public education.

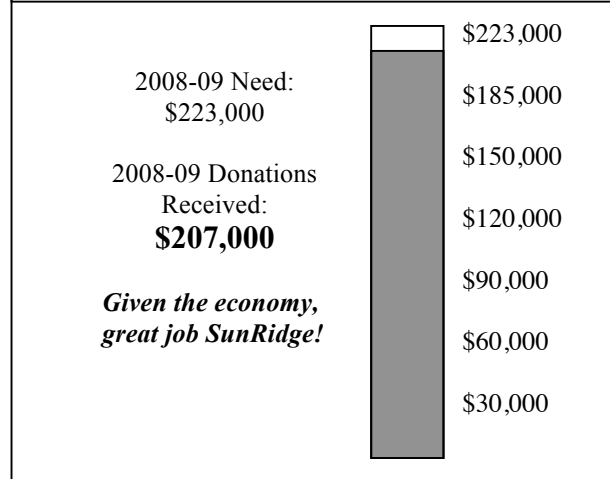
Addressing the Budget Crisis

As reported at the end of the school year, the State made additional cuts to the 2008-09 funding for SunRidge to the tune of \$215 per student, or \$42,291. Then next year, there will be an additional cut of \$230 per student. These are severe cuts, about 10% of our State revenue. So far, we made preliminary spending cuts of \$40,000 in May, and at the June 24 Charter Council meeting another \$27,000 in cuts were made. We are hoping that our enrollment and parent pledges will remain fairly steady so that this amount of cuts will get us through this year while we develop long term strategies for addressing dwindling state funding. The funds raised during the recent on-line auction have been applied to next year’s budget needs, minimizing the cuts made and helping us to keep our Specialty classes mostly intact.

Donations Needed for Supplies and Materials

Part of how we hope to balance the budget this coming year is to request parent contributions to meet the cost of supplies and materials for our classrooms. Most Waldorf methods schools now do this in addition to requesting monthly pledges, as materials and supplies are extremely expensive in a Waldorf methods school. For example, our kindergartens spend over \$3000 on food supplies each year, and paint, brushes, paper, main lesson books, and other supplies can cost up to \$2000 per class in the grades. To enable us to continue to provide these essential supplies and materials for the children we are asking that parents contribute **\$100 per student per year** for that purpose. Ideally, this once-per-year \$100 per student materials contribution would be donated during the summer months (\$50 in July and \$50 in August?) so that it is available early on when we need to purchase most supplies. Parents are welcome, of course, to make their materials contribution at any time, but please include a note differentiating it from your regular pledge donations. If we don’t receive adequate contributions for supplies we may need to cut back on what teachers have previously been able to provide to the children. Thank you in advance for your help with this important need.

2008-09 Pledge Program Report



Pledge Commitments Please

We have attached our annual pledge commitment form to this bulletin so that you can let us know what your pledge commitment will be for 2009-10. Please be as generous as you can, as we will be totally dependent on our pledge program to keep our programs during the state funding crisis. Reminder: we need as many families as possible to pledge \$200 (or more) per month per child. If you can’t do that amount, do the highest amount you can, no matter what the amount may be. Except for those who are out of work and struggling to meet basic needs, **everyone** should be contributing something to their child’s school this coming year. State funding per pupil in California is now almost the lowest in the nation, and is not adequate for even a basic education much less one with the “extras” we provide. Please join this community effort of pledging to maintain the quality of education every child receives at SunRidge.

SunRidge Educational Foundation Report

Our Foundation continues to be instrumental in funding essential needs for our school. Foundation funds come from private donations and fundraisers (calendar and t-shirt sales, private donations, escrip and community smart cards, the auction, etc.). In 2008-09, the Foundation had general revenues of approximately \$90,000, as well as a generous \$200,000 donation targeted to future site acquisition or development. The Foundation made contributions to the SunRidge School this past year as follows (numbers rounded):

Waldorf & other training for teachers	\$15,000
Gardening/Cooking program	\$13,000
Class Supplies	\$3,000
Equipment/furniture	\$14,000
Site Improvements	\$7,000
Specialty program support	\$6,000
Parent Council for festivals, events, and Fundraising	\$4,300
Approximate Total of Contributions =	\$62,300

Our Foundation makes possible what is not possible with limited state funding, thanks to the many supporters who donate funds and participate in our fundraising activities. Though the Foundation operates “behind the scenes”, it is an essential part of the ongoing stability and success of our school. Next year, the Foundation has already approved contributions to continue our Waldorf training and mentoring for teachers, add a roof over our amphitheatre as well as other site improvements, pay for the 4-days of Tribes training for 20 staff, purchase some needed desks and chairs, and provide an initial \$23,000 to our Specialty program to avoid needing to make cuts due to reductions in school funding. Thank you SunRidge Foundation!

8th Grade Graduation Delights

What a delightful 8th grade graduation we had on June 12! As usual, the students were impressive with their presentations that ranged from speeches both funny and poignant, instrumental performances, a Chinese dance, and a (Waldorf) rap number that will not soon be forgotten. Each student was acknowledged for their unique contribution to our school and their class, and even Shakespeare made a surprise appearance (you had to be there). Our 7th grade parents and students did a phenomenal job of decorating the stage and eating area, and provided a sumptuous feast of food and drink in a festive and tasteful setting. Many, many thanks to everyone who helped make this event so successful, including Eddie Guthman and his musicians, the parking crew, Robin Zickel for his excellent sound system, the decorators and those who brought flowers and plants, Tom Bayless for his work on the nice program, everyone on the graduation committee that brought it all to fruition, and everyone else who I have inadvertently left out of this acknowledgment. Congratulations to our graduating class of 2009, and their parents, without whom the work would have been a lot harder, and a whole lot less fun.

A Few Yearbooks Still Available

There are five SunRidge yearbooks available for sale to anyone who wants one. Only \$15.00 each. Call Leslie Washington to get one, 824-2449.

Community Events of Interest

SAVE THE DATE ~ Saturday, September 12th, 2:00 – 6:00pm, for our annual **Back to School Party 2009!** Come frolic and play with the SunRidge Community! Welcome all of the new families and welcome each other back after our summer break. This year’s party will feature: a dunk tank, community games, live music, yummy food and more. Who knows, you may even make some new friends! See you then!

Something to Think About

This last year we had 46 students take time out of school for “independent study” for a total of 364 school days, a 31% increase over the previous year. While we do get paid by the state for students on independent study, setting up independent study plans and reviewing them as required by the State is a time consuming, extra job for our teachers and administrative staff. The extraordinarily high level of independent study in our school may also draw undesired scrutiny from State auditors and result in negative attention from our district.

Please realize that you are part of a community of families whose choices, when looked at individually may seem inconsequential, but when added together with everyone else, do become consequential. This next year will be very tight financially, and everyone will be asked to do more with less. Please keep this in mind when scheduling any vacations or trips during the school year—use the vacation periods when the school is closed: Thanksgiving week, the winter holidays break, the February break, and the spring break. We really need fewer independent study plans, and all students here in school for the maximum number of days possible.

Summer Shopping Reminder

When shopping for school clothes, please remember our new dress code that starts with the new school year. It is included as an attachment for your convenience. The new change regarding no images or writing will be enforced so please help us keep our focus on education rather than dress code enforcement by supporting your child coming to school properly attired. Thank you!

Fundraising carwash on Sunday, August 9th, 11am to 4pm!

The new 8th Grade invites you to bring your car or truck to the 76 Station at 116 and Occidental Road for the finest carwash this side of the Pacific Ocean! AND you may find some other tempting goodies for sale as well. Carwash is by your donation and goodwill. Hope to see you there! Any questions? Call Gregory Moyer at 824-1686.

Summer Helpers Still Needed *from Owen*

You are invited to or help work on one or more of our summer projects as part of your community service.

- Re-paint the neediest six exterior walls
- Install a couple of RR tie steps in the path down from the office to prevent erosion
- Turn (fluff up) the flakes in the swing box
- Re-seal and re-stripe the basketball court
- Sand and re-finish desks and chairs
- Install vents in the community room “attic”
- Install doors on the community room cabinets
- Obtain and spread new chips on the track around the (to be) grassy field

Please call or stop by after July 19: 479-3214, Owen

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