

## **From the Principal**

April 30, 2007

### **Junior Olympics**

Congratulations to each Springer student who participated in the Junior Olympics last Saturday. This was a memorable day. The Junior Olympics Committee, Staff, and I promoted spirit, personal best, and support of classmates,. All three elements were completely evident on Saturday. I am very proud of our students and appreciate each family's support of this very worthwhile day.

Thank you to our Junior Olympic organizing committee ! Joanne R. – Marina H.O. – Elizabeth M. – Melinda C. – Elizabeth D. Hooray!

### **Step Up to Writing Assessment**

The culminating effort of our first year implementing Step Up to Writing as the Kindergarten through Grade 6 writing program is to perform an assessment to determine individual student growth and performance. Also, the writing assessment is intended to serve as a tool for evaluation of instruction.

On Wednesday, April 18th the staffs of each elementary school came together to screen the student writing samples administered the week before. The staffs met in grade level groups. They have been trained in using what is called a rubric assessment.

The student samples were scored on a 4 point scale by a minimum of two readers. The rubric allows the readers and ultimately the student to review his/her writing and recognize the qualities of writing that are strong, and the needs for further development.

At the PTA Meeting on Tuesday evening, May 9, I will lead a writing scoring simulation for our parents and community members in order for all to have a better understanding of the elements of writing being instructed and evaluated in the Step Up to Writing Program. Please come. I think the parents who do attend this meeting will have a better understanding of the writing expectations from our writing program.

The support for this assessment program comes from a grant from LAEF (Los Altos Educational Foundation ). We are indebted to our families for their continued support of educational excellence in Los Altos.

### **An Idea**

Last year, the Springer community made a giant leap forward and supported funding through the WalkAThon to upgrade the computer lab and to purchase a laptop cart for use in the grade six classroom. Both projects have contributed to learning success by our students. I have noted major gains in engagement, student products, and a "leveling of the playing field for all students" in terms of product.

Our sixth grade teachers were trained by Apple,Inc. and learned state of the art instructional strategies in order for students to understand and apply new concepts.

This summer, our fifth grade teachers are undergoing the training program, but do not have

access to the computer cart because of grade six usage. This leads me to begin thinking about a means of funding laptop computer carts for both grades five and six.

One thought I am exploring is to make a direct appeal to the grade five and grade six parents to support the digital literacy program in the upper grade classroom( grades five and six). This request would appeal for funds in the amount of \$ 150.00 per family of grades five and six.

This idea is being discussed on campus at School Site Council, Technology Committee, Staff, and at Principal's Coffee. I am promoting our plan of laptop use in grades five and six, and a funding model that would ask the grades who are using the laptop computers to voluntarily make a donation to cover the use fee for the year.

I will be discussing this idea in further Principal Corner articles. If you would like to respond to this idea please do so: [bceleste@springerschool.net](mailto:bceleste@springerschool.net).

### **And Finally a Letter Worth Reading...**

Dear Parents of Springer Singers:

I just wanted to let you know that the kids did an absolutely wonderful job today at the Los Altos Sub-Acute. We had a wonderful turnout for this event, and everyone seemed to be in fine voice. There were many smiles in our audience, and I can assure you that your children really made the day for the people there who were lucky enough to see them.

Thanks to all those that helped with the driving, several of whom stepped in at the last moment: Elizabeth S., Kimberley D., Cynthia T., Mike B., Linda B., Alice L., Michelle M., Trina P., Gissela R., Hellen P., Svasti P., Tracy W., Melissa E., Nic N., Viviane W.

Please pass my congratulations along to your children; they were the best I have ever heard them!

Claire H.