

Forest Ranch Charter School

November 10, 2010 Newsletter

Director's Report

I can't believe it is already the end of the first trimester. We have had an exciting trimester filled with hard work, field trips, and many engaging projects. Ms. Lyon's class recently performed, Vacation to Mars, wrapping up their unit on the solar system. I was very proud of the hard work that went into their lively musical production!! We had a visit last week from local author, Mike Graf. He put on a 2 hour weather workshop for 3rd through 6th grade students. Order forms are available at school for families interested in purchasing any of Mike's realistic fiction books.

The Full Moon Festival was a great success. I'd like to thank all of the families and 6th grade students who worked so hard to make this happen. The children had a wonderful time. It is exciting to see many things coming together and to have repeat events running more smoothly each year. It feels like we are creating our own new traditions while still honoring the memories of our former school.

On another note, we tried something a bit different with conferences this year. We met before report cards so as to focus on goal setting for the year and initial assessments. Next year we will add another optional conference after the second trimester to discuss growth and support/challenge plans as needed for your student. This was a brainstorm that happened after the calendar was set, however teachers will be touching base with parents as needed throughout this school year and a conference can always be requested as needed for individual families. We also have decided to break our detailed end of the year survey into a few smaller,

EVENTS



UPCOMING EVENTS

* These events occur at school unless otherwise noted.

11/11/10: NO SCHOOL

11/11/10: Board Meeting 6pm

11/16/10: PTP Meeting 6pm

11/17/10: Picture Retake Day 1pm

11/19/10: Mrs. Stearns Heritage Feast
6-7:30pm - Everyone is welcome

11/22 - 11/26/10: Thanksgiving Break

12/9/10: Board Meeting 6pm

12/15/10: Winter Concert 6:30-8pm

12/20/10 - 1/2/2011: Winter Break

more specific surveys. The first survey will be specific to your child's classroom and will be coming out via E-mail in the next few weeks. Families who do not have E-mail will receive a paper copy. Please fill these out as soon as possible. Our intention is to receive feedback early on so that we can modify practices to best meet all of our students needs.

Mrs. Stearns's 1/2nd grade class has been studying how children lived long ago. They have been working hard setting up a mock town, sewing, baking bread and line dancing. Everyone is invited to a Heritage Festival on Friday, November 19 from 6-7:30pm hosted by the 1 / 2 class. The festivities will include a potluck meal, student performances, and dancing. I look forward to seeing many of you there. Enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday! Help your children count their blessings.

Christia Marasco

Brief History of Forest Ranch Charter School

By Kiersten Morgan

FRCS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, dedicated to the operation, management, guidance, and promotion of Forest Ranch Charter School. In order to keep our school community informed of our ongoing endeavors the Board provides regular updates in the school newsletter. This month's report from the Board gives a brief history of our school.

Forest Ranch, California is a small, unincorporated community of approximately 2,000 residents. We are located in the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Chico. Our town was formalized in 1878 when a post office and school district were established. In 1964

Chico Unified School District (CUSD) took over the running of Forest Ranch Elementary School (FRES). Because of the town's growing population and school census, a new school was built in 1991 to replace the historic one-room schoolhouse.

Unfortunately due to multiple causes including, lowered parent confidence in the education provided by CUSD, the school census dropped to 43 students in the 2007/2008 school year. Faced with an unprecedented budget crisis, in April 2008 CUSD voted to close FRES. With FRES closing, a small group of volunteer parents and community members banded together to establish a Charter School in Forest Ranch.

The founders understood that for FRCS to be fiscally solvent we would need to increase enrollment (as with all public schools, the majority of our funding comes from State sources and is based on enrollment) and rely on a large amount of community and family volunteer support. Our school would need to offer more to students and families than had CUSD. To address these concerns, we developed a school committed to educating children based on research driven "best practices" and an emphasis on the development of the whole child. We also decided to draw on our majestic surroundings and incorporate an environmental studies school emphasis. In response to the needs of our working families, we developed an after school program. We also provide busing from Chico for families there looking for a small school or just an alternative from CUSD.

In order to be up and running by Fall 2008, we had only six weeks to complete all of the requirements for charter approval. These requirements included: writing our charter document, developing a solvent three year budget, enrolling at least 50 students, raising substantial cash reserves, securing a \$100,000 line of credit, and negotiating the

school facility lease. To the amazement of CUSD and most onlookers, our charter was approved June 30, 2008, in record time.

With charter approval in hand, the all volunteer founding group now needed to develop every aspect of the school, essentially from scratch. Responsibilities included: finalizing curriculum, ordering books, hiring and contracting with staff, securing furniture, cleaning the school, grant applications, writing our policies and procedures, developing an after school program, implementing busing from Chico, continuing fundraising, and complying with state and federal regulations. In the Fall of 2008, we opened our doors with 52 students. Today we have 95 students, are among the top performing schools in the district, and we are thriving!

Thank you Annie B's Donors

The results are in and we have good news! Forest Ranch Charter School raised \$16,764.14 during the Annie B's Fundraising Drive. The North Valley Community Foundation match of \$1,676.41 brings the donation total to a whopping \$18,440.55! As advertised, these donations will help fund transportation, a program critical to the school's continued success. We could not be more pleased with the ongoing support shown by our students, families, and community members. Thank you very much.

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