



## No Nuts at Washington, Please!

### CALENDAR

#### Late November

**29<sup>th</sup> - African American Unity Meeting** 5:30-7:00, Library. Childcare and dinner provided.

#### December

**Every Tuesday and Thursday - English (ESL) classes** 2:30 - 4:30 p.m., Library. All levels welcome. Childcare provided.

**1<sup>st</sup> - Leadership Team Meeting** 5:00-7:00 p.m., Library. Childcare provided.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Encouraging Early Readers in Spanish-Speaking Families Special meeting,** 9-11 a.m. B12.

**5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> Cody's Book Fair at Washington Room 1** (see p. 2 for details)

**6<sup>th</sup> - BUSD School Lunch Initiative Forum** 7:00 p.m., Malcolm X School, 1731 Prince Street (see p. 3)

**7<sup>th</sup> - BUSD Meeting** 7:30 p.m., 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way (Organizational Meeting)

**8<sup>th</sup> - Winter Celebration** 7:00 p.m., Cafetorium

**10<sup>th</sup> - BUSD Kindergarten Faire** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Rosa Parks, 920 Allston Way

**13<sup>th</sup> - PTA Potluck Party** 6:00, Cafetorium & library. Childcare provided.

#### EARLY JANUARY

**10<sup>th</sup> - PTA Meeting**

**16<sup>th</sup> - Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday**

Washington is beginning an effort to discourage nuts of all types from the school site because of the danger they pose to students who are very allergic to them. This includes all nut products, including peanut butter and nut oils. Nut residue can end up on tables, books, pencil sharpeners, and other shared items. One touch by someone who is severely allergic can mean a very sick child. Several students at Washington have nut allergies. Statistically, about 1% of children have nut allergies.

Some may feel that discouraging nuts is unfair to other students and not the answer, since it could produce a false sense of security to the allergic student. But it is impractical to make sure that all students always wash their hands thoroughly after eating, and the consequences to the allergic student can be severe. Symptoms can range from hives, itching, and swelling to anaphylactic shock, which involves respiratory distress and a sharp drop in blood pressure. If not treated promptly with an injection of epinephrine, severe reactions can be fatal (some 100 deaths from nut allergies occur annually in the U.S. plus 15,000 visits to emergency rooms). Students with severe allergies are trained to be vigilant,

carry epinephrine, and older kids know how to use it, but deserve to have a school environment with reduced risk of exposure.

Washington asks for your consideration of these students.

If peanut butter and jelly or other nut products are a mainstay in your child's lunchbox, you might consider serving peanut butter on toast at breakfast (washing hands before leaving for school) and switching to tuna, cheese, or low-fat deli meats in lunchtime sandwiches.



Food that is brought to school to share at class parties and school events should never include nuts of any type. At a minimum, they should be clearly labeled as containing nuts and each child should be asked about allergies before being offered the food.

If your child has an allergy of any type, please be sure that your teacher is aware of it and contact the school office immediately to update the emergency card that is kept on file.

For those of you with babies and toddlers at home, you can reduce the chance that your child will develop a nut allergy by waiting until the immune system is mature before feeding nuts to your child and, if the mother is breastfeeding, she should avoid eating nuts. ■

**Do you pack a nutritious lunch that your kids love? Share your tips with us!**

See page 3.



Kidz Club drumming class performs on Nov. 21. See p. 2 for K.C. update.

## How to Contact Your Teacher By Voicemail

All school voicemail boxes have the same phone number, 644-4500. Each teacher's extension begins with the number 21 followed by the number of their classroom. For example, Mr. Fairchild, in room 112, would be 21112.

## Take the Edvoice Survey

Edvoice is a nonprofit education advocacy organization. Edvoice is taking a survey of the views of school communities on education issues. Responses will help shape their efforts in Sacramento. You can take the survey at <http://schools.edvoice.org/> (it takes only a few minutes). As an incentive, Washington will earn \$1 for each person who responds. After taking the survey, you can sign up for EdVoice Action Alerts, a tool that will allow you to send emails or faxes to your legislators on issues that affect our school.

## Cody's School Benefit Daze Receipts, Please!

Those of you who shopped at Cody's (or Codysbooks.com) during the November 11-14 in-store "School Benefit Daze" -- thank you! There's just one more small thing to do - turn in your receipts.

Please place your receipts (originals, not copies) in an envelope marked "PTA - Cody's" and mail or bring them to the school office and place them in the white mailbox. That's it - we'll do the rest, and Cody's will donate 15% of all your purchases to the PTA. Or mail them to Washington at: 2300 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704-1480.

Please send receipts before school lets out for the holidays to be sure we get credit for your purchases. (If you need to keep receipts until after giving a gift, we can accept a few last minute receipts the first week when school starts up again.)

# Kidz Club Update

Over 200 kids, parents, Kidz Club staff and other members of the Washington community attended the first Kidz Club potluck on November 21. Several extra tables had to be brought out to hold all of the food that was contributed!

The kids demonstrated what they've been learning in their Kidz Club enrichment classes by performing Spanish songs, hip-hop dance, drumming, and West African dance. The cooking class made tasty dishes for the potluck and the paintings from the art class adorned the walls.

Kidz Club Site Director Ann Callegari provided an overview of the program, and introduced the instructional technicians -- Diana Perris, Windy Galloway, Alvin Jackson and Corina Topping, plus Coach Natalie of Sports4Kids, and the 17 (!) program volunteers.

Callegari also announced a few program changes. Most notably, homework time has been moved up to first in the afternoon schedule to ensure that kids have enough time and energy to complete their assignments. The new schedule is:

**Homework Hour: 2:30-3:30**  
**Snack: 3:30-3:45**  
**Enrichment activities: 3:45-4:45**  
**Outdoor fun and games: 4:45-5:15**  
 (students can do homework and get one-on-one tutoring at this time)

## Cody's Bookfair Comes to Washington!

Between Monday, December 5th and Friday, December 9th, Cody's Books is sponsoring a book fair at our school to help raise money for our PTA and its important projects. The fair will be held in Room 1, across from the library.

This year's fair will have an excellent range of multicultural titles, new fiction and nonfiction, classic favorites for all ages, a fun selection of books in Spanish (particularly for younger children), and many other delights. Drop by and stock up -- books make great gifts, and Washington PTA gets 20% of all receipts!

Book Fair hours will be from 7:45 a.m. until 3 p.m., with extended hours of 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, December 8th (Winter Celebration night).

Most classrooms will be scheduling visits to the fair, so children can note the books they would like, and discuss their choices with you prior to making purchases. Teachers and Librarian Mead will also be posting "Wish Lists" in case parents would like to donate a book or two to their child's classroom, school library, or reading resource program.

**Academic Enrichment: 5:15-5:45**  
 (reading and games)

**Program ends: 6:00**

Another announcement: Kidz Club is looking for a few committed parents/guardians to participate in the Kidz Club Council. The goal is for the Council to hold bi-monthly meetings, determine the best way to use our resources, and to assist with a Kidz Club newsletter.

Callegari suggested that parents also consider earning volunteer credit by reading with their child and/or other children for 15-20 minutes before leaving the site (parents can read to the children or have the children read to parents).

All parents are expected to volunteer 10 hours per year (parents should sign in when they arrive and wear a "Volunteer" sticker). If you have no time to volunteer, donations can be substituted. Suggested donations include bottled water, fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy snacks, books and games. Donations are tax deductible.

Finally, a reminder that fees must be paid by the fifth of the month. A \$10 late fee will be assessed.

While the program is still evolving to best serve kids and their families, it's very clear that Kidz Club is a big success, earning much gratitude from families. Many thanks to Ann and her terrific staff! ■

Students can make purchases with cash or with checks made out to "Cody's Books." Adults can also use credit cards (VISA or MasterCard) at the Book Fair.

Additional funds can be raised for Washington by logging on to [www.codysbooks.com](http://www.codysbooks.com) and buying anything available through that Web site from December 5th through 9th. Don't forget to mention Washington Elementary School when you are making your online purchases. If you want a book that isn't on display at the fair, you can still special order it through any of the Washington parents staffing the fair, and Cody's will deliver it to the school for your child to bring home (or you can pick it up at Cody's on 4th Street or on Telegraph Avenue.)

If you would like to volunteer for the Book Fair, contact Alison Bryant (644-8202) or Janet Guastavino (653-2159), or simply sign-up on the Volunteer Sign-Up sheet on the PTA's bulletin board in the hallway outside Washington's main office. ■

**Vengan aprender como ayudar a sus niños**

Vengan aprender como ayudar a sus niños con juegos de lectura. de 9-11 a.m. el viernes, 2 de Diciembre en Bungalow 12 a Washington. Para las familias de habla hispana que tengan niños en grados kinder a tercero.

¿Preguntas? Llame a Linda Franco - 558-0550.

**Come See What Drew Prince Charles to Berkeley!**

Come to a forum on BUSD's School Lunch Initiative on Tuesday, December 6, and learn about what Prince Charles recently came to Berkeley to see. The forum will focus on the nutrition and school lunch program that is being developed in Berkeley, which has become a national model for nutrition education.

The School Lunch Initiative is revolutionizing school lunch by making food a central part of the academic curriculum. The Initiative includes gardens, kitchen classrooms, and lunchrooms as contexts for learning. It is a collaboration of BUSD, Chez Panisse Foundation, Berkeley's Center for Ecoliteracy and Children's Hospital, Oakland.

The forum starts at 7:00 p.m. at Malcolm X School, 1731 Prince Street (one block South of Ashby Avenue).

**New iMAC**

Many thanks Margaret Norman and Geof Holton, parents of Emmet Holton, for donating an iMAC to a Washington School family in October.

**Trumpeters Play at Assembly**

Trumpeter James Tinsley and pianist Miles Graber graced our stage during Assembly on November 18. Special thanks to our wonderful librarian Suzy Mead for arranging this performance!

**Share Your Nutritious Lunch Tips**

Kids need healthy food to perform well at school and to maintain their health now and later in life (see below). Washington's Parent Handbook urges parents keep chips, cookies, soft drinks, and candy to a minimum at home, and to avoid packing them in lunches. And beware! if Principal Kimball sees these items in the cafeteria, she will require the child to eat all of their healthier items first!

A typical healthy home-packed lunch would include a sandwich with whole grain bread, a piece of fruit, and milk (milk can also be purchased at school for 35 cents). But there are many other nutritious combinations. *The Acorn* would like to share parents' (and kids') successes in developing healthy lunch combinations that kids like, are easy to prepare, and are affordable. Please leave your ideas in the PTA mailbox in the plastic envelope for *The Acorn* or send them via email to [nrader@igc.org](mailto:nrader@igc.org).

In the meantime, here are some suggestions for small changes that make a nutritional difference.

Instead of:	Consider:
Higher-fat lunch meats	Lower-fat deli meats, such as turkey
White bread	Whole-grain breads (wheat, oat, multigrain)
Mayonnaise	Light mayonnaise or mustard
Fried chips and snacks	Baked chips, air-popped popcorn, trail mix, veggies and dip
Fruit in syrup	Fruit in natural juices or fresh fruit
Cookies and snack cakes	Trail mix, yogurt, or homemade baked goods such as oatmeal cookies or fruit muffins
Fruit drinks and soda *	Milk, water, or 100% fruit juice

\* P.S. Gatorade is not a health drink! Gatorade has an image of being a healthy drink because some athletes drink it to replenish minerals lost through sweating. But other than those minerals, which are not necessary for a healthy child, Gatorade is simply refined sugar and water - the nutritional equivalent of soda. ■

**Diabetes on the Rise in Children**

*Compiled from www.drgreene.com (a great source of pediatric health information)*

Twenty five percent of obese children are already glucose intolerant and at high risk for developing diabetes, according to a Yale University study published in the March 14, 2002 *New England Journal of Medicine*. There is currently an epidemic of Type 2, or adult onset, diabetes among young children and adolescents. This used to be thought of as a disease of the middle aged and elderly.

Children who develop Type 2 diabetes await a lifetime of struggling against the medical complications of diabetes. While others enjoy their youth in their 20's and 30's, these will already face the possibility of poor

circulation, ulcers of the feet, atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, kidney problems, eye problems, and the slow deadening of some of their nerves.

Obesity can lead to many other health problems as well, including hypertension and asthma. Treating obesity in children is well worth the effort.

Treating obesity involves permanently changing basic eating and exercise habits, and involves the whole family. Whole fruit, whole vegetables, and whole grains should make up the bulk of the diet.

You can find out whether your child is obese at the Center for Disease Control's website - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (search for BMI Calculator) - simply by entering your child's height and weight into the Body Mass Index Calculator. ■

**Rethinking Universal Breakfast**

The October *Acorn* reported that Universal Breakfast would be starting at Washington on November 1. That did not happen due to concerns expressed by teachers and parents about the program.

The concerns include: the instructional time that serving breakfast would take; the possibility that it would discourage breakfast at home; potential excess calorie intake; and other unintended consequences of an otherwise worthy program.

The teachers' union has begun to

research these questions, including studying the experience at LeConte Elementary where the program has been implemented with mixed reviews. A Washington School task force has also been formed with teachers, staff and parents. This group will be sending a survey home with kids in December to help inform its discussions. Please look for that survey, fill it out and send it back with your child or return it to your child's teacher.

For more information, talk to Kindergarten teacher Tom Fairchild. ■

## PTA Officers

Please contact any one of the officers if you have ideas, questions or concerns.

**Linda Currie** - Chair. Phone: 848-4005, email: lindamurphydog@aol.com

**Anita Payne** - Co-Vice-Chair. Phone: 981-1212, email: ariesslady30@yahoo.com

**Kathy Stafford** - Co-Vice-Chair. Phone: 510-848-7223

**Mimi Chin** - Treasurer. Phone: 510-548-2999, email: mimichin@berkeley.edu

**Sahoko Tamagawa** - Secretary. Phone: 848-8338, email: sahotkot@yahoo.com

**Newsletter Editor** - Nancy Rader, phone: 510-845-5077, email: nrader@igc.org.

**Contributors** - Linda Currie, Sahoko Tamagawa, Rita Kimball, Kate Graves, Ann Callegari. Articles, ideas and information for *The Acorn* are welcome.

## Washington Elementary

2300 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704  
Phone: 644-6310  
Fax: 644-7718

**Rita Kimball**, Principal. Email: rita\_kimball@berkeley.k12.ca.us

**Paula Shoemaker**, School Secretary. Email: paula\_shoemaker@berkeley.k12.ca.us

**Kate Graves**, Family and Community Resource Programs. 644-6939  
kate\_graves@berkeley.k12.ca.us

**Ann Callegari**, Kidz Club Coordinator. 644-6939  
ann\_callegari@berkeley.k12.ca.us

## Berkeley Unified School District

2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704  
Phone: 644-6348  
Fax: 540-5358  
www.berkeley.k12.ca.us



# Playground Update: Kindergarten Yard Still Unfinished

On Monday, October 24, the Washington School Community was pleasantly surprised to see beautiful new asphalt basketball courts with crisp, newly painted lines. Over the weekend the previously postponed resurfacing had been carried out. Since then, benches and picnic tables have also been added to round out the plan developed by the landscape architects with input from the Washington Community.

We are still awaiting the grand opening of the kindergarten yard. This corner of the site was to be defined by a concrete retaining wall that encircled a sunken play yard. The wall was to function as a seat for assembling the kindergarten classes facing inward. During the construction phase, the design was reversed with an elevated play yard instead, creating a falling hazard off the edge and also causing the children to face outward. Washington staff never approved this change.

Input from the Washington community was brought to the architect and a simple fix was agreed upon: bringing the level of chips down on the inside of the curved wall and building the dirt level up on the outside, thereby minimizing the drop and realizing the original intent of the wall: to make a seating circle for children. However this work is yet to be done and there is no date for its completion.

All in all, we have many great additions to our school including a new garden classroom, a new "yellow brick road" to the front door, relocation of the hazardous boulders in the wooded area to Bancroft Street, wood chips in the forest, new trees, and a new blacktop. Now all we need is the kindergarten yard completed! Concerned parents should address their thoughts in writing to Lew Jones, Director, Facilities Department, Berkeley Unified School District, 1720 Oregon Street, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Here is the text of one petition that was sent by a group of parents: "As parents of kindergarteners at Washington School we are dismayed by the fact that our children cannot use their new play yard. When school started at the end of August, it looked very nearly complete. Two and a half months have passed and our children are still not able to play in it. With November half over and rainy season upon us, it looks as if they may not get to use the yard this year at all! As you know, during construction changes were made to the design without the input of Washington staff. This resulted in a design that is impractical and unsafe for small children to run around in. Fortunately, there is a simple solution to the problem. We urge you to implement it as soon as possible!"  
--Contributed by Washington parent Sahoko Tamagawa ■

## Please Document Your Child's Absences

When students are absent, our office is required to obtain documentation verifying the nature of the absence. Parents or guardians should provide documentation in the form of a written note, which should include all of the following:

1. Full name of the student
2. Date(s) of absence
3. Specific reason for absence
4. Name and relationship of person providing information (e.g., mother or father)
5. Date of the note

This note should be given to your child's teacher upon their return to the school. If for some reason it is impossible to send a note, then a message may be left in the teacher's voicemail box. Please do not call the office.

When a child has three or more unexcused absences or more than three tardies of 30 minutes or more, the school is put on alert and you will receive a letter.

Your child is considered to be in attendance for the day if they come to school and go home sick.

## Tune In to Washington Talk!

Get the latest news and announcements from Washington School by email -- sign up for Washington Talk! It's easy -- just send a blank email

message to [wtalk@topica.com](mailto:wtalk@topica.com). Send your own messages to everyone on the list by sending a message to [wtalk@topica.com](mailto:wtalk@topica.com).