



NEWSLETTER

A Time For Change

Coming together to create positive change in our community...



Above, some students in West County Community High School's "Be The Change" class are working hard to maintain and finish their project, WCCHS's garden. The garden project began in the Spring of 2008, with the inspiration and motivation of Giovanni Pasquini, a "Be The Change" student who seeks to use his passions to contribute to his community and make a positive change.

Hello Peacekey and West County Community High School friends, families, and supporters! We have all been through a great deal of change in our lives throughout the past year. Along with those changes, as you know, I have also taken over as President of Peacekey. I am grateful for the opportunity to be the President of Peacekey, and honored to be teaching at West County Community High School as well. Peacekey's board of directors is growing, and we are currently planning fundraisers for the upcoming Spring. WCCHS continues to grow in size (with 100 students and a wait-list) and continues to flourish with talented returning and newly hired facilitators and administrative staff.

Please check out the "School Contributions" section of this newsletter to see articles about exciting accomplishments and visions from teachers and students from Peacekey's first school, WCCHS.

*In Gratitude and Peace,
Melissa Emborn, CEO Peacekey*

PEACEKEY CALENDAR

Next Quarterly Peacekey Board Meeting:

Date: Sunday, 2/15/09

Time: 11 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Location: 5504 Burlingame Ave., Richmond, CA 94804

Upcoming Fundraiser:

Date: Thursday, 1/8/09

Time: all day

Location: Chevy's Mexican Grill

****A flyer will be sent to you via email...print this out and take it with you to Chevy's so that a percentage of your purchase will be donated to Peacekey.**

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SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS...

“WCCHS”

By: Ixmucane Chavez
WCCHS Student

As a student at West County Community High School (WCCHS), I find the school to be very caring and helpful to all of us students. We have become a community and have learned to organize and compromise.

The teachers help us to organize our schoolwork in their own time and are dedicated to teaching us. Their teaching techniques are more helpful, and better than most schools. They actually teach us the lessons, rather than slacking off. Since I came to this school [in 2007], my grades and attitude have changed and improved.

“The New President”

by: James Wiley
WCCHS Student

The new president is a person who will change the world. He has been on Sixty Minutes with his wife and children. He was elected in Chicago at 8:17 p.m. A few weeks ago, thousands and thousands of people cheered for him. From then until now, something just clicked-- a surprising moment that people all over Berkeley, Oakland, and El Cerrito felt. The first African-American to be elected President of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

“Tutoring: It Works!”

By: Rosemary Thomas
WCCHS Community Space/Academic Support Facilitator,
and After School Tutor

According to U.S. Department of Education, studies have shown that tutoring does work. Students not only improve in a subject after one-on-one tutoring, they also exhibit more self confidence after recognizing their achievement. Overall,

tutoring helps students to develop problem-solving skills that can be used in secondary school as well as college, vocational schools, and other areas of their life.

The implementation of tutoring programs is also emphasized within the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 because of lessons learned and scientific research that proves tutoring works. The final regulations establish that supplemental educational services (such as tutoring) are a critical part helping students to achieve higher academic standards.

Why does tutoring work? Tutoring offers personalized help. Each student has the opportunity to ask questions, work on problems at their own pace, and to overcome barriers unique to them. Tutoring also allows a learner to receive immediate corrective feedback along with positive encouragement to stay on task.

Tutoring at WCCHS. Teachers at WCCHS recognize the value of personalized instruction. Classes at WCCHS are small, typically ranging from 22 to 25 students. As a result, teachers are able to easily identify when a student requires additional assistance within the classroom and when the added support of being tutored after school is required. Teachers assign students to tutoring and then follow up with the tutoring facilitator. Each student’s progress report is reviewed and discussed to determine a focus and course of action. Both the tutoring facilitator and teacher monitor the student’s progress.

Tutoring is held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4:20 pm to 5:15 pm in the Community Space, a spacious area that allows students to work alone or at a table with other students. The group ranges from 8 to 12 students per session. Parents are welcome to come by and to participate as a volunteer. To volunteer to tutor a student in algebra, geometry, English, history, or chemistry, call Rosemary Thomas at (510) 898-1495.

Additional information. Additional information on the research results regarding the benefits of tutoring is available on the U.S. Department of Education web site at <http://www.ed.gov>.

“Being the Change!”

by: Melissa Einhorn
“Be the Change” and “Learning to Learn” Facilitator

Here is a partial list of some of the current “Be The Change” projects:

- * The Garden Project, working with Earth Team, created a video about their project, and the video will be on television and on www.greenscreentv.org.
- * One group has raised money to donate to Algalita (towards research of & prevention of the “Garbage Patch”).
- * One group will be giving a presentation about recycling to elementary students.
- * One group is creating an “Earth Fest” educational school event at WCCHS using biodegradable products and composting, while integrating drama and chemistry class projects.



(SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS, CONT.)

("Being the Change!", continued)

- * Another group is educating WCCHS students and families by showing "Garbage Patch" and "Global Warming" videos.
- * Two groups are cleaning up garbage on school grounds and in the community, and then creating a Power Point presentation to show their peers and families.
- * Several groups are giving informative presentations about recycling to the student body, having recycling contests, and providing recycling statistics.
- * Several students wrote, performed and recorded environmentally conscious music at Berkeley Community Media to be aired on television and on the internet (www.greenscreentv.org). More information TBA.
- * An entire class will be creating and performing a play to educate WCCHS peers about the "Story of Stuff."
- * A couple of groups held recycling contests at the school.
- * All students will be maintaining a worm composting bin.
- * Several students are purchasing biodegradable products for school use to replace plastic-ware.
- * Two groups used biodegradable ware for school fundraisers.

we started lacking much of the financial and personnel support that schools need.

But it is a testament to our teachers, our board members, my co-director Kristin, and the support we received by Peacekey that we not only survived, but developed.

Now, classes are more engaging, students are happy, and they are studying. Visitors to WCCHS see learning happen in every room--even in our community space, once a chaotic social area, is now a quiet productive study hall where students work to achieve better in their classes.

What we have learned here at WCCHS is that our students (surely all students) need boundaries and connections to succeed. We cannot succeed academically if we do not have pieces in place to care for the emotional well-being of our kids, and we cannot reach our kids' hearts unless we engage their minds with content and provide a safe structure in which to exist.

So our school is safe. We don't allow gang signs, colors, or clothing. We have strict rules about conduct and academic demands, and our teachers strive to make every lesson meaningful.

But we know that, in order to succeed, we must also meet our students' emotional needs. That's why we have homeroom classes four days a week where the teachers can interact with the students in safe, fun, ways, check in with individuals who may be having problems, do service acts for the school, and have time for check-ins, appreciations, and other community building activities.

It's also why we started a Non-Violent Communication group where eight students meet weekly with Michael Cohen to learn the language and skills of NVC. We have also started proving onsite therapy for our troubled kids so that they can meet with a licensed counselor.

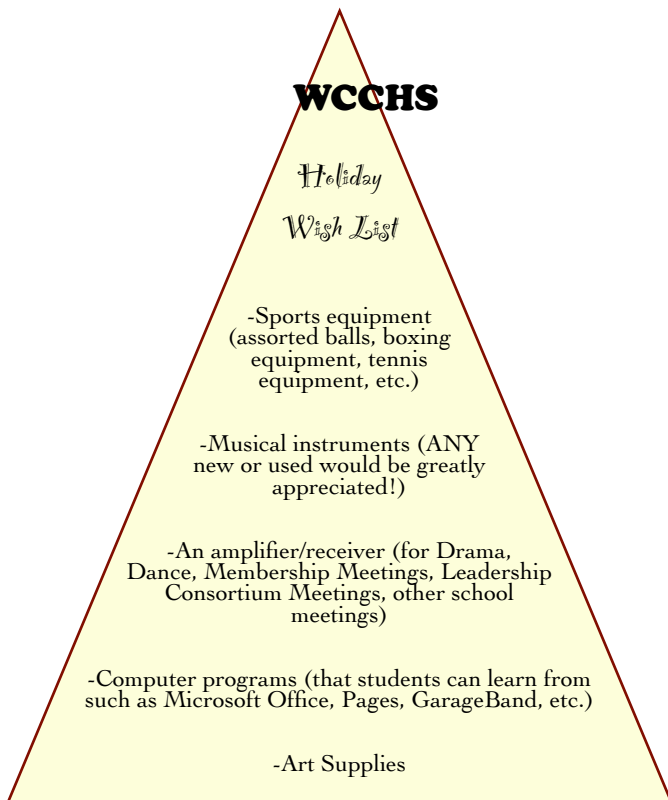
This year we saw growth in the number of students who have reached the "Choose" division--the second in three levels of autonomy: Notice, Choose, and Act. Students in Choose have more freedom on campus and less structured time in the day. One student said to me only yesterday, "I like being in Choose," as she selected community college classes that meet her passions.

Our student judicial group, the JC, started mediating conflicts between teachers and students, and the legislative group, the LC, amended the student rule book, and sponsored games and contests that build morale and community.

Under Melissa Einhorn's guidance, the Be The Change classes have become passionate about addressing environmental problems. Two students have taken it on themselves to replace all the plastic-ware at school with compost-able utensils. Another group created a video about a WCCHS's garden, and, recently, four students were featured on TV.

Did I mention the boxing club, music club, anime club?

And while these structured programs are impressive, they are dwarfed by the countless acts of connection that go on every day, that can go on every day, in a small school such as ours where we have the ability and desire to treat each student as



"WCCHS Educational Director Update"

by: Gary Einhorn
Educational Director, WCCHS

In a year and a few months time, we've seen WCCHS grow from a collection of wishes to a stable, functioning school. Last year was a difficult year for us. It was our first year, and



(“WCCHS Educational Director Update”, continued)

an individual. Where we can TALK to our students about their behavior--instead of only punishing. Where students can really learn about us.

We still have a long way to go--we always will. As the Educational Director, I will always want to see our academics improve; I want to see a thriving and engaging sports program, and I want to see our students graduate and go on to college. These are tough goals to have in our tough economy. Budget cuts have hurt us hard all ready, and more are sure to come, but we will continue to work hard every day for these kids.

That’s another benefit of connection--it makes you keep trying.

WHO’S INVOLVED?

This last page is dedicated to those who carry the Peacekey mission: to enable communities to create powerful charter schools with academic excellence, arts, and athletics built upon the principles of authenticity, connection and engaged learning in an environment where every student feels safe, loved, and celebrated. . This includes Peacekey board members, consultants, and facilitators and board members from Peacekey schools.

<u>Peacekey Board Members:</u>
Melissa Einhorn- Chief Executive Officer
Gary Einhorn- Secretary
Maureen Pasini- Chief Financial Officer
<u>Currently Seeking:</u>
Peacekey Representative for WCCHS Board
Additional Consultants
Director of Curriculum
Director of Aesthetics
Director of Technology
Grant Writer

For more information about Peacekey, please check out our website at www.peacekey.org. If you would like to become involved, donate, or contribute in anyway, please contact us directly:

Peacekey, Inc.
5504 Burlingame Ave.
Richmond, CA 94804
(510) 526-8926

WCCHS School Board

- Victoria Purdy: Board President
- Linda Asher: Personnel Director
- Kevin Purdy: Site Management Chair
- Kim Banuelos: Grant-writing Co-Chair
- Tim Banuelos: Grant-writing Co-Chair
- Carol Centeno: Financial Chair
- Octavio Maldonado: Fundraising Co-Chair
- Bobby Whitney: Fundraising Co Chair
- Erika Maldonado: Participation Chair
- Dewanda Joseph: Admissions Chair
- Gary Einhorn: Educational Director
- Kristin Kirkman: Administrative Director
- Vacant Position: Secretary*

WCCHS Administrators & Facilitators

- Gary Einhorn-** Educational Director, Math/Web Design Facilitator
- Kristin Kirkman-** Administrative Director, Yearbook Class Facilitator
- Brenda Santos-** Administrative Secretary
- Monroe Benschop-** Gym Facilitator
- Maria Briones-** Legislative Consortium/Spanish/Women’s Training Facilitator
- Jeannette Casarez-** Community Space Facilitator, Gym Class Aide (??)
- Evelyn Centeno-** Chemistry/Algebra/Homeroom Facilitator
- Melissa Einhorn-** Be The Change/Learning to Learn/Music Club/ Homeroom Facilitator
- Adam Lieb-** RSP Facilitator
- Crystall Mitchell-** Teacher’s Aide/Classroom Supervisor
- Jochelle Perena-** Judicial Consortium/Individualized Algebra/Dance/ Drama Facilitator
- Yvette Pulido-** English/History/Homeroom Facilitator
- Gina Rivera-Cater-** History Facilitator
- Eliyahu Sills-** Men’s Training Facilitator
- Randall Sokoloff-** Creative Writing/English Facilitator
- Rosemary Thomas-** Classroom Aide/Community Space/Academic Support Facilitator, After School Tutor

Peacekey wishes you all a beautiful New Year. Thank you for all of your support throughout the years!