



# FAITH NETWORK NEWSLETTER

**Our mission** is to give hope to disadvantaged children by showing them God's unconditional love and by guiding them into becoming whole persons - socially, intellectually and spiritually.

March 2005

Faith Network of the East Bay, Inc. Monthly Newsletter

## THANKS TO

- Carol Jones for the donation of a VCR to EnCompass Academy.
- Jon Blankmeyer for the donation of office furniture.
- Kathleen Conroy for the donation of a new bean bag chair for Emerson Elementary.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Faith Network's **4th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event** will be held June 6, 6:45 - 8:15 pm at the Joaquin Miller Conference Center. Save the date!

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Volunteer as a tutor, mentor, playground monitor
- Help provide teacher appreciation luncheons
- Come to the Library Spruce-Up Day at Emerson - March 12
- Serve as an assistant soccer coach at Castlemont High
- Pray for our children and for the shalom of the city
- Financially support our mission

## CONTACT

Interested in volunteering?  
Contact us :

email: [info@faith-network.com](mailto:info@faith-network.com)

**NEW!**

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## Compelled to Act by Mark Torres

Pastor of Community Action and Spiritual Formation, First Covenant Church

Last fall a group of people from First Covenant Church visited Laurel Elementary School for the first time. We were surprised to notice that the library was in severe disorder and looked to be closed down. There were boxes spread throughout, papers on the floor, and old cabinets dominating the center of the room. The library was not being used by teachers, staff, or students. We asked Principal Garrett why this was. Unfortunately, with budgetary cuts there was no one to staff the library and keep things in order. Also, the library had to serve as a storage room for their yearly supplies since there was a general lack of room on the campus. Someone from our group asked, "How can we give the school back their library?" We felt compelled to act!



Mark Torres tutoring Joshua, a third grader at Laurel.

We asked Principal Garrett if we could help renovate the library. First we had a team of volunteers remove the old, dusty cabinets out of the library and begin the clean up process. Then someone from our group purchased a renovated storage container, (the kind you see being pulled by semi trucks), so that the school would have extra storage space! That did the trick! We had the container delivered and then we were able to move the supplies into the container. We found a few volunteers to help categorize the books so that they could be re-shelved, and the room started to take the shape of a library once again. Thank God for believers who are compelled to act!

## Reviving Emerson's Library by Dave Hendsch

Volunteer Coordinator, First Presbyterian Church, Berkeley

Faith Network is on the move! Five FN volunteers (Marlowe Eng, Randy Roth, Kim Watson - Abigail, Susan White and Dave Hendsch) joined six Grand Lake Kiwanians and fifty Key Clubbers from Oakland Tech. High School in cleaning and organizing various parts of the school facilities. The key focus was the library. Dirty and messy, it was transformed into a spacious, orderly and fresh-looking environment. Five classrooms were impacted the same way, including the installation of classroom computers. Even the main office got a face lift. Some bulletin boards were brightened and reorganized for future use. To top it off, barrel planters displayed fresh color and greenery. The principal and staff were in a euphoric state of shock when we left.



Dave Hendsch organizing books.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Dear Friends,

One of the most empowering things we can do for our children is to help them become successful readers. The fact that 70% of our urban public school third graders are reading below grade level should provoke a public outcry.

An obvious way to boost literacy in Oakland is to ensure that our public schools have working libraries. Faith Network's Community Literacy Coach, Zaretta Hammond, says libraries are important in the lives of children for two key reasons. "First it supports continued reading development. Kids who go to the library and check out books regularly develop larger vocabularies which lead to better comprehension and fluency. But more important is the fact that libraries are places of discovery. They get to use their imaginations as they read about far off places and people. It is a place that encourages them to fall in love with reading and become life long learners."

Last year Faith Network volunteers helped to rejuvenate the Burbank library. I will never forget the grand re-opening day when Principal Alanna Lim cut the ribbon and excited kindergarteners entered a sparkling clean, beautifully decorated room filled with alluring books and smiling volunteers. They each got their cookie and sat down in the cushy reading corner to listen to a story, and then they meandered through the stacks to select a book to check out. This year we are working on two Library Projects, one at Laurel Elementary and the other at Emerson Elementary. Hopefully both libraries will be back in business in the coming weeks.

What makes all this possible are a network of churches adopting urban public schools and volunteers willing to roll up their sleeves and put their faith to work! Will you consider joining their ranks?

Blessings,



## NEWS

Check our website for updates on projects that Faith Network is working on. There may be opportunities for you to serve on a one time or occasional basis.

[www.faith-network.com](http://www.faith-network.com)

## MENTORING AT BURCKHALTER

Lisa Oler, 5th grade teacher at Burckhalter Elementary, asked if Faith Network could provide support for one of her students in critical need of one-on-one mentoring. Newly enlisted volunteer Bill Branagh was presented with the challenge, and he agreed to connect with Ms. Oler, which eventually led to Bill's being introduced to Jason with whom he now meets weekly. Jason's eyes light up when Bill comes into the classroom. And Bill says, "This is fun!" Faith Network is need of more men like Bill, willing to be life coaches for our boys.



Bill Branagh with Jason, fifth grader at Burckhalter