

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, physically and spiritually



February 2009

CALLING ALL GOLFERS!

Our 2nd Annual Benefiting Our Children Golf Classic

Friday, May 15, 2009

Metropolitan Golf Links,
Oakland

Stay tuned for more
information!



TUTOR TRAINING

Upcoming Tutor Training for
Excel Reading Clinic Tutors:

WHEN: Saturday Feb. 7th
from 9am-11am

WHERE: Regeneration Church
(238 E 15th St. Oakland)

WHAT: Literacy Specialist
Carolyn Piraino will introduce
the building blocks of reading
and how to guide a child into
becoming a successful reader.

To sign up call **Chelsea Boniak**
at 510/836-5100 or email her
at chelsea@faith-network.com.

CONTACT

Interested in volunteering?
Contact us:

Email: info@faith-network.com
Phone 510/836.5100
Fax 510/836.5105

Concert Helps Ruby Bridges 5th Graders go to Science Camp

This week, eighty-five fifth graders from Ruby Bridges Elementary in Alameda will have the chance to learn Science in the great outdoors. Because of the efforts of **Daughters of Grace**, First Baptist of Alameda and so many more, a generous amount was raised to help send these students to Mission Springs Outdoor Education. Their fundraising concert contributed to the \$16,000 needed for this three day trip.

The Gospel Christmas Concert, held December 6th, sold out both shows and packed the house. Daughters of Grace opened the show by getting the crowd on their feet with gospel Christmas and worship songs followed by numerous talent acts: dancing, singing, acting and instrumental performances. MCs Frank and Donna Somerville, Lewis Polk and Jalyn

Crum, did a fabulous job supporting the friend building purpose of the concert.

Mrs. Ruby Bridges herself was present to support the effort and participated in a book signing of "Through My Eyes."

For more information on how to buy a DVD of the concert or to donate to a Science Camp scholarship, contact Chelsea at the Faith Network office.

Please keep the Ruby Bridges 5th graders in your prayers for a safe and positive experience!



Daughters of Grace



Ruby Bridges signing books

In Search of Snails

By Rick Leong, First Pres. Youth Volunteer

The crew gathered as the sun began to set. Following a quick field orientation and an equipment check ("Flashlights? Check."), the adventure to seek and capture the might Helix Aspersa (Snails) began.

Faith Network connected with **Lisa Valenti-Jordan**, Middle School Director at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, and shared about a need for common garden snails for use in science classes. Lisa immediately thought "middle school students" + "snails" = FUN! On December 29th, the intrepid group of adventurers spent a couple of hours tracking down and gently capturing the slimy, little creatures. The sounds of students shouting "Over here, over here" and "Shine the light over here" echoed throughout the neighborhood, while interested onlookers inquired about the excitement. 400 snails were collected for the SMART Science Center of Oakland Unified School District.

Directed by **Caleb Cheung**, the center equips all 65 Oakland elementary schools and over 1,000 teachers with supplies and materials to teach the nationally acclaimed FOSS science curriculum, which was developed at U.C. Berkeley.





RANDY ROTH

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

Normally our newsletter focuses on students and our volunteers who serve them. But this time we felt it was appropriate to put a spotlight on two principals who have served resource-poor urban public schools in Oakland. While Faith Network's first priority is the children, we have become increasingly aware that whatever we can do to encourage our principals and teachers will, in turn, impact the kids. A school is like a family, and when one member is hurting others are affected. Therefore we decided to publish excerpts of letters recently sent to us by Principals Dhameera Ahmed and Patricia Washington (see below). These unsolicited expressions of appreciation give tribute to Faith Network's helpful presence on school campuses. It's not just a matter of providing tangible material resources; more importantly it is the generosity of spirit, the gifts of listening and empathy that foster an environment where peace and hope can grow and flourish.

Sincerely,

THANKS TO

- Windemere Ranch Middle School and Doherty Valley High School in San Ramon who shared the Christmas spirit by delivering Christmas gifts to Lockwood, Futures and Community United elementary schools in East Oakland. School staff expressed a great deal of appreciation. Many of their families are dealing with additional financial hardships during this season.
- Everyone who donated raffle items for Ruby Bridges science camp scholarships. Over \$3,000 was raised to help send 85 5th graders to Mission Springs Outdoor Education, Feb. 4-6.

STAFF

- Randy Roth, *President*
- Jocelyne Birren, *Grant Writing*
- Chelsea Boniak, *Executive Administrator*
- Norman Brooks, *Director Science Horizons*
- Rebecca Buckley, *Associate Director*
- Natasha Hicks, *Volunteer Director*
- Charlotte Martinez, *Director Health4Kids*
- Carolyn Piraino, *Director Excel Reading Clinics*

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Principal Reflections



"Thanks so much for all of your help and support last year. I especially thank you for your time, expertise, effort, and energy in planning, implementing, and sponsoring the Board Inspired Community Conversation Meeting.

You and the Faith Network staff have served Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School with such grace, love, and sincerity in donating bicycles, backpacks, books, athletic game tickets, Science Camp, and more to provide extraordinary opportunities, experiences, and supplies for our students. Your sacrifices and generous support are greatly appreciated."

Sincerely,

Patricia Washington, *Principal of MLK Jr. Elementary*

"I learned so much about giving from the heart from you and your organization. I learned more about forgiveness and reaching for the essence of our spirit to stand us up to face another day. I saw children partnered with caring adults who had great expectations of them.

As a Principal I always knew I could consult with you over anything that troubled my heart and stood in the way of creating a healthy environment for both students and adults. We worked on a long term plan to improve student achievement. Your support certainly contributed to the rise in the test scores and the decision to allow Burckhalter School to remain open."

Peace be with you,

Dhameera Ahmad, *former Principal of Burckhalter Elementary*

