

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

# Lamorinda Schools

## Family Forum

### Who's In Charge? (Part 2)

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Alison and James came in to discuss their five year-old, Maggie, who was hitting and kicking them when she was angry. She also shouted "I hate you" at times and frequently refused to obey. Both parents were trying hard to be reasonable and to obtain Maggie's cooperation. Neither of them wanted to be harsh or overbearing. However, they were not taking charge, and Maggie was exploiting the situation.

We developed a positive discipline plan so that Alison and James would have control. They waited until there was a calm time when no one was tired, hungry or emotional, and they explained that there would be new rules with consequences and rewards.

I recommended targeting two or three behaviors at a time. When Maggie mastered these behaviors, they could then work on others. If there were no new "challenges" they could take a break

until a new issue arose.

For Maggie's plan we targeted the kicking, hitting, and mean words. Her parents explained briefly why these behaviors were not okay, and specified what she could do instead when she was angry and upset. She needed to use words, but not mean words like "hate." She could say, "I'm really mad," or have a signal, such as pulling on her ears, to show she was mad.

Alison and James set up consequences for when Maggie engaged in any of these targeted behaviors. There was NO discussion, lecturing, persuading, or explaining – only action. The consequences they chose included time-outs, no TV for two days, going to bed early, and no special outings.

At the same time, it is essential to have rewards built into the disciplinary plan which is why this approach is called "positive



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discipline." The key is for parents to show their reluctance to have to discipline, that your child's behavior unfortunately forces you to take action. There should be no anger involved, only disappointment. An angry reaction from you will only produce an angry reaction back from your child. You want to aim for calm resolution.

Positive incentives for Maggie included a longer bedtime story when she had a day of good behavior. Alison and James made a little chart with stickers and gave Maggie a small toy for achieving her goals three days in a row and then an ice-cream outing when she achieved a week of good behavior. You can stretch out the intervals for administering rewards, and eventually the new behavior will become well-established.

It is best for older children to participate in some of the decision-making in order to gain their full cooperation. They can choose among the consequences and rewards you propose, and occasionally you can select one of their ideas. Again, the idea is to have a calm, methodical way of disciplining so everyone knows in advance what to expect, and so that emotions will be low-key.

Children are very adept at reading body language. If they sense that you aren't sure what to do, they will often take advantage of a situation. Sometimes, they will provoke you for the sheer thrill and power of seeing you squirm. Therefore, it is important to act like you know what you are doing, even if you don't! And ultimately, if you have a positive discipline plan, you won't need to pretend.

## A Day of Respect at Stanley Middle School

By Jean Follmer



Educational Theatre Company performs at Stanley Day of Respect assembly

Photo Jean Follmer

Every three years, Stanley Middle School students break from their routine for a Day of Respect, an integral part of the Year of Respect. Stanley has three themes which rotate annually: Responsibility, Integrity and Respect. Stanley students experience each theme at some point during their 6th, 7th and 8th grade years.

The theme of the 2008 Day of Respect was "Everyone Counts and You Can Count on Me", a reinforcement of the existing Stanley theme. Counselors Sarah Day and Shirley Haberfeld coordinated the event. Teams of five (parent, community representative, high school student, 8th grader and teacher) were trained to handle the activities throughout the day. The day began with an assembly that centered on a skit by The Educational Theatre Company of Los Angeles. The skit was set in a peer mediation meeting after school and reviewed the events that necessitated the meeting. The characters were the mediator, a girl, a boy and a bully. In one scene, the bully shouted gender based insults at the girl. In another, the bully hurled insults at the boy for being a nerd. After much back and forth, the bully explained his

behavior by saying, "I never started making fun of other people until people started making fun of me. Then I'd go home and my sister would pick on me too. Then I started hitting people first and teasing people first so I could get the upper hand."

The mediator, an actor named Gigi, pointed out that the bully's insults were fueled by prejudices. She explained that prejudices can exist due to sexism, racism or numerous other differences between people. Gigi asked whether or not it would be good if everyone were the same. "What's wrong with people being different? We can't all be the same. If we were, we'd all like the same music and we'd all wear Uggs. Life would be impossible."

Kids often don't realize how much they hurt others when they use their words as weapons. When an actor hurled an insult at another, the recipient shouted "Ow!" because the words hurt and "make scars inside". A student said "This helped us realize that (although) name calling doesn't always seem bad, it is." Gigi suggested the students should "Let people know they're hurting you.

It may cause them to do a personal inventory and think about it the next time."

People rarely know the reasons for the perceived differences of others. In the case of the boy in the skit, he said he was always smart and started getting teased for getting straight A's. He said "Nobody wanted to be my friend, so the lonelier I got, the more I turned to books. The more I got teased, the more I turned to books and the more I turned to books the more I got teased." An observer pointed out that being teased for grades, both good and bad is not uncommon in this community of over-achievers. Some kids find themselves stuck in an endless cycle, and events like the Day of Respect give those kids a better chance because the bullies are being educated about the effects of their behaviors on others.

The importance of respect, tolerance and understanding were emphasized. According to Sarah Day, "The event is representative of the many grass root efforts at Stanley to foster not only quality education, but a school community which reflects and supports respect and dignity for all."



## OLD FIREHOUSE SCHOOL Walnut Creek and Lafayette



### Open House Nights:

Lafayette: January 15th, February 6th, ...8:00 P.m.  
Walnut Creek: January 17th, February 20th, ...7:00 p.m.  
Adults Only Please

- Serving Infants to 5 year olds in Lafayette
- Toddlers 2 to 4 year olds in Walnut Creek
- Full-Time & Part Time

#### What parents have to say about OFS:

"At the core of the school is clearly a sophisticated and well established program. It is sophisticated in the many details - the daily reports, the organization of staff support and even a continuity plan for staff to stay with the same kids all 5 years at the school. But fundamentally, the heart of the school is the nurturing staff, who teach the kids how to deal with their emotions, to work together, to have fun together and most of all be happy kids."

- William Greif, MD & Lisa Greif Parents of an OFS Graduate and a 2 year old.

Winner of the 2007 "Parents Choice" award as the Best Preschool in the East Bay from the readers of The Bay Area Parent.

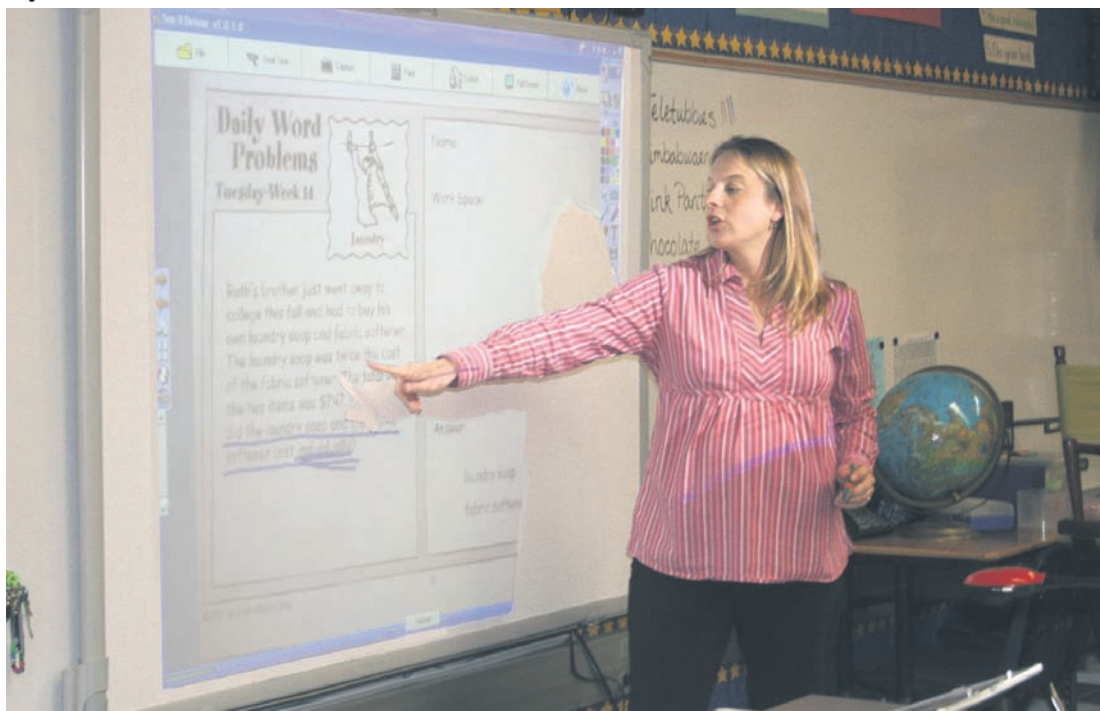
Executive Director, Dorothy Stewart, EdD  
Call for more information

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## School Blackboards Turn White

By Andrea A. Firth



Los Perales' fifth grade teacher Lindsay Garrity at work at the whiteboard

Photo Andrea A. Firth

Not so long ago being chosen by the teacher to go outside to clap the chalk dust from the blackboard erasers was a task reserved for the best-behaved boy or girl in class each day. Unlike their middle-aged parents, children of the Z generation and beyond will probably never have the opportunity to smack erasers, because today's blackboards do not require erasers or chalk. They aren't even black—the new color is white. The whiteboard is a large, interactive display that connects to a computer, a document reader, and a projector. "It is a user-friendly tool for teachers and students which integrates several different mediums," explains Bruce Burns, Principal of Joaquin Moraga Middle School. "It creates a high level of student engagement, allows for instant feedback to the classroom, and presents educational material in visual, tactile and auditory modalities."

Fifth-grade teacher Lindsay Garrity has been piloting the electronic whiteboard in her classroom at Los Perales Elementary School in Moraga for almost a year. "It's changed the way I teach, because I can show them everything that I want them to see," explains Garrity.

The projector displays the computer desktop onto the whiteboard surface that is shown on a screen. Documents, websites, educational software, and streaming

video are all examples of what can be displayed on the whiteboard. Alternately, the document reader can be used with the projector and whiteboard to display hardcopy material such as books and worksheets. Using interactive software and a stylus, the teacher can "write" directly on the whiteboard. The document can then be saved (as an electronic file) and displayed again later or printed and distributed to students. The teacher has access to a color palette for writing and highlighting information, a protractor to create angles, text, graphics, and many other features. In addition, classroom response systems that work via handheld remote controls allow student to answer questions and the results can be tabulated and displayed.

Garrity finds being able to display and write directly on the whiteboard provides her students with a better understanding of the lesson. "It makes my directions much more clear, because I can visually and verbally explain what I am talking about. Plus I can highlight specific things." The application of the technology for working through math problems or editing text are obvious, but Garrity finds that she uses the whiteboard 85% of the time that she is teaching and across all subjects.

And the students, what do they think about this new technol-

ogy? "They love it," states Garrity. "Kids are so technologically driven these days. The whiteboard keeps their attention much more. Sometimes they are just looking for me to make a mistake so that they can catch it," she adds with a laugh. "But that's fine. The kids love to come up and use it too."

Several schools in the Moraga School District have embraced the whiteboard and are working with their school PTAs to obtain funding for the technology. One of the biggest challenges to incorporating the whiteboard into schools is the cost—this can range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per classroom depending on the number of components of the system that are required. For example, some classrooms may already have a laptop computer or LCD projector, which represent a significant cost savings. Currently, Los Perales has six whiteboards up and running; Camino Pablo Elementary has three classrooms outfitted and plans to install three more next year; Rheem School hopes to add their first four whiteboard systems by the end of this year; and Joaquin Moraga Middle School is fundraising to introduce the technology at their school site. Schools in Orinda and Lafayette are also piloting the whiteboard technology on a limited basis as they evaluate the system.

## Your child's probably ready to go to UC Berkeley.

Your children are precious, aren't they? And one of their most precious gifts is their eyes. That's why we encourage you to have your children's eyes examined first at nine months of age, again at three years, and regularly after that.

Who are we? We're the University of California Eye Center in Berkeley, a key part of UC's top-rated School of Optometry. And we can offer you a great deal of expertise with youngsters' eyes.

In fact, here at UC we've developed ways to test kids' eyes while they play, and to diagnose and treat any vision problems even before they can read an eye chart.



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