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■ SCHOOL MATTERS

Passions shared at Discovery Fair

On June 3, students at Fairmeadow Elementary School had a chance to learn American Sign Language, ride a unicycle, play human chess, throw martial arts moves, roll sushi and participate in a host of other activities coordinated primarily by their own parents.

"Our academic year is focused and, by design, covers only a fraction of life's possibilities," said Fairmeadow kindergarten teacher Sara McNinch, who masterminded the event known as Discovery Day.

"Discovery Day opens our children's minds and imaginations to the variety of unique activities available to them," McNinch continued. "They get to share other people's passions ... and perhaps discover one their own."

The event features roughly 40 different activity sessions led by parents, grandparents, teachers, staff and interested volunteers. Each student gets to sign up for two hands-on activities. The entire school community gets involved, turning the Fairmeadow campus into a hub of intergenerational exploration, learning and fun. Discovery Day is unique within



PREEVA TRAMIEL

the Palo Alto Unified School District.

"Discovery Day is an exciting, enriching event that children enjoy and can cherish as they look back on their elementary school years," said Principal Eric Goddard. "It taps into the unique talent pool of parents, teachers and staff, and delivers our students a special, personalized and lasting learning experience."

Teachers, staff and the PTA organize the event. The PTA supports Fairmeadow by providing enhanced educational materials and technology, library books, electronic news, a school directory, parent education events, and a host of community-building activities.

Survey says

How many elementary schoolchildren need outside help to learn math? PAUSD has composed a 10-question survey and is calling for parents to answer, anonymously, some very good questions about their child's reaction to and engagement with its materials.

The survey is available on the district's Web site at <http://newsblog2.pausd.org/post.cfm/elementary-math-survey>.

"We're doing this to get a baseline on elementary math prior to adopting Everyday Math in the fall," school Trustee Dana Tom said. "We want to have the best possible introduction of these new materials."

The district is looking into math education in the district, Tom said, because "the recent adoption for elementary math was of such community concern."

Parents have been informed of the survey through electronic newsletters, and the school board's adoption of Everyday Math has made the local television news. Tom said he hopes that as many elementary parents as possible fill out the survey.

"The broader the survey, the better the data," he said.

Recognizing service

School Matters would like to congratulate Palo Alto Council of PTAs President Dan Dykwel and Erwin Morton, vice president of education, for winning the Golden Oak award. Dykwel and Morton received the special recognition at Friday's Honorary Service Awards.

School Matters is happy to hear your feedback. Please e-mail any comments to schoolmatters@paloaltopta.org to reach Preeva Tramiel.