

Dear Santa Rita Families,

I am intrigued by the 20% time Google is known for, with its roots coming from 3M and other innovative companies. In case you don't know, Google allows each employee to use 20% of his/her time on a project of personal interest. One can be an engineer and give public tours of the Googleplex one day a week or work on a new project idea - it's by choice. 3M claims that Masking Tape and Post-its were invented using this choice time, and Gmail came about this way as well. The belief in this 20% system comes from the fact that these companies feel their employees are more motivated and productive in their regular work when they are also allowed to work on a special project of interest.

This premise makes me wonder what would happen if students were allowed to run 20% of their own learning time. Right now, I know my oldest would love to spend time studying the intricacies of *Harry Potter* - he is hooked! In the process he could investigate the magical science and compare it to our modern science, write some great opinion pieces on the characters and on-going plot, or sketch and design the entire *Harry Potter* world using the images in his head and the facts in the books. He could certainly learn many skills and concepts through this *Harry Potter* learning experience, including many of the required standards. I can tell you, his motivation would be through the roof!

All of the educational research that I've read indicates that by the time a student reaches middle school, choice is imperative in keeping students motivated to continue coming to school to learn. (It works for me as a learner, too!) For some, it may be *Harry Potter*, for others it may be baseball, trains, Greek myths, or butterflies. I know that this 20% is a far out idea, and our fantastic teachers work hard to teach the expansive curriculum already. But I do wonder if providing more choice in learning would help our kids stay motivated and be even more engaged in learning all year long. We'll be having this conversation as a staff this year as we look into project based learning, technology integration, and the results of our Project Cornerstone student survey.

Here's to thinking about more choice!

Sandra

Upcoming Dates:

- 9/14 Striders lunch time walk/run program begins
- 9/20 Santa Rita Tracksters morning running program begins (4-6 graders)
- 9/23 PTA meeting, 8:45 am, after assembly, Multipurpose Room
- 9/24 Los Altos Pet Parade, Downtown Los Altos, 9:30 a.m.
- 9/27 Project Cornerstone Presentation – survey results, 7-9 pm, Multi (adults only)
- 9/30 Student Artwork for Directory due

Have you completed your Back to School packet? The packet includes School Supply payment, PTA membership and direct donation request, and Birthday Book Club. Click here to begin: <http://www.santaritaschool.org/pta/BTS.html>

Donate to LAEF now! The Los Altos Educational Foundation (LAEF) has committed to

raise \$2.35 million for our school district. Questions? Contact Santa Rita's LAEF reps Tanya Capuano at tpcapuano@gmail.com, Zoe Conroy at zfconroy@yahoo.com, or Alan Cyron at ajcyron@msn.com or visit <http://laefonline.net>; **Donate Now** at <http://laefonline.net/donate>

Striders starts September 14th! Need volunteers!

Hundreds of Santa Rita students participate in Striders each year, racking up impressive mileage in the pursuit of physical fitness, community accolades, and small plastic charms! Parent volunteers keep this program going, and have a great time in the process. If you can volunteer even a small number of Wednesdays, noon-1pm, this year, please contact Amy Stuart Hunn at amystuarthunn@gmail.com. All participants must submit a waiver, to download the waiver, visit:

<http://www.santaritaschool.org/parent/ptaprograms.html>

Tracksters starts September 20! We are a non-competitive running club for 4th, 5th and 6th graders. We will meet every Tuesday and Friday 7:30am- 8:15am at the Santa Rita track. To register, place waiver and \$20 (checks payable to Santa Rita PTA) in the Tracksters box in office. For more information and to download the waiver, visit:

<http://www.santaritaschool.org/parent/ptaprograms.html>

The 64th Annual Los Altos Pet Parade will be held on Saturday, September 24 at 9:30 a.m. Wear your Santa Rita red and march with our Bobcat mascot and your friends in the Pet Parade! Bring a pet if you can, but stuffed animals are fine too. The first 50 Santa Rita students to arrive at the Pet Parade will receive a red bandanna. Come join in the fun! Questions? Contact Nira Metcalf for more information nirametcalf@gmail.com

The eScrip "10% Goes Back to Schools" program is in full swing! When you purchase any of the over 2000 10% Goes Back to Schools products (marked with the school bus tags) now through September 13th, Santa Rita will earn 10% of the purchase price! But not if you're not signed up!! Register or re-register today for eScrip at www.escrip.com. It's safe, secure and smart for Santa Rita.

Student artwork for the Santa Rita Student Directory is due Friday, September 30th! Drawings should be in black pen, marker, or dark pencil on a half sheet of paper. Please put the artwork in the Directory Artwork box in the school office. Lots of artwork is needed and every effort will be made to include all that is received, however space is limited. Drawings will not be returned.

Now Registering for After School Enrichment classes! Check out the new Pre-engineering Lego class as well as Dance, Science, Mandarin, Hindi, Math and much more. Visit <http://www.santaritaschool.org/parent/enrichment.html>. If you have any questions contact Becky Fuchs at fuchsfamily@gmail.com or Gigi Tsern at gigitsern@gmail.com.

Want the inside scoop and up to date info on Santa Rita and our PTA? Join our PTA Facebook page! Go to the PTA page of the website and click "like" on the Facebook feed: http://www.santaritaschool.org/pta/pta_index.html

School and Community News

http://www.losaltos.k12.ca.us/PDF_Files/Current_School_News.PDF