

Dear Santa Rita Families,

The greatest gift I have ever received was from my dad when I was just five years old. I got a phone call from Santa in early December, asking me what I wanted for Christmas and whether or not I had been a good girl. This gift kept on giving, as I received a phone call from Santa in early December for years. When we moved houses when I was nine, Santa called to celebrate the fact that we now had three fireplaces and so many ways for him to get in and deliver presents.

As I grew older and became a bit skeptical, Santa stuck to his questions and assured me that he was, indeed, THE Santa. I was certain it was my dad or my uncle or my dad's best friend. But each year, one of these great men would be at my house when Santa called, forcing me to come up with a new idea about who could be calling me. I always went along with the call to humor the Old Man. The look on my college roommate's face was priceless as I assured Santa I would be home for Christmas, and he didn't need to find a way into the dorm to deliver my gifts.

Santa knew all about my ever-changing life and followed me closely for almost twenty years. Toward the end of my college years, I was at home one day when my dad received a phone call. Dad walked out with tears streaming down his face to tell us that Santa had died. It turns out that MY Santa was an old coworker of my dad's who truly loved the spirit of the holiday season. He and my dad talked only once a year so that my dad could give him the updated scoop. I never had the chance to meet him face to face, but he had a tremendous impact on my life and taught me so much about giving. Now, when my ten year old asks me with skepticism about Santa, I have no problem looking him straight in the eye and saying, "Mom believes in Santa."

Whether you celebrate Christmas, will enjoy Hanukkah later this month, or simply take the next few weeks as a well deserved Winter break, always remember that sometimes the greatest gifts in life don't come in a box.

Here's to a restful December vacation, filled with family, friends, joy, and peace!

Sandra (Reprinted from December 2010 in honor of Andy Morando, my Santa)

Upcoming Dates:

12/16 Pajama Spirit Day for all students - come to school in your jammies!
12/16 Last Day of Holiday Toy Drive for CSA
12/19-1/3 December Recess, no school
1/4 School Resumes

Hot Lunch Reminder! Don't forget to order you hot lunch for January now.

<http://www.choicelunch.com>

Turn your holiday shopping into extra \$\$\$ for Santa Rita! Don't forget that very Amazon purchase you make via the Santa Rita website earns a percentage back for our school. Click on the Amazon button on the lower left corner of the Santa Rita homepage to access Amazon.com and start earning money for Santa Rita today.

Holiday Toy Drive Our partnership with the CSA In Mt. View continues with our

collection of New Toys that will be distributed to local families in need. Each year the CSA sets up a store for "parents in need" to shop for holiday gifts for their children. We are asking for new, unwrapped gifts for children. A donation box is in the school office until tomorrow. This is another great opportunity to help teach our children about the joy of giving to others.

Tax Reminder Please remember to take advantage of your tax deductible donations to LAEF by the end of December. Also, many companies contribute to LAEF by matching donations their employees make. This is "free money" for our schools. Please ensure that your company match is filed by the end of the year.
<http://laefonline.net/>

Auction Winners, please make your payment! If you have not yet paid for your Witches Delight Silent Auction winnings, please do so before the end of the year to take advantage of the tax deductions! Also, PTA wants to close the books on this event before 2012. Thank you for your understanding.

Project Cornerstone Author in Town TONIGHT, Dec 15th 7-8:15 pm! Special evening presentation with children's advocate and best-selling author Trudy Ludwig: Understanding Our Kids' Social World: Friendships, Cliques & Power Plays, Thursday, Dec 15th, 7:00- 8:15 P.M. at Menlo Park Library. Her nationally acclaimed books, My Secret Bully, Just Kidding, Sorry, Trouble Talk®, Too Perfect, Confessions of a Former Bully, and her newest release, Better Than You, focus on helping children thrive in their social world.

Holiday Cards Fundraiser: It is not too late to take advantage of this amazing opportunity to benefit our children. Tiny Prints and an anonymous donor have offered to donate 25% of total proceeds to LAEF for all holiday cards ordered through <http://www.tinyprints.com/storefront/laef>. This offer expires on Dec 31.

Holiday Donation Drive for Special Ed: The Individualized Education PTA is collecting iTunes Gift Cards to support iPads for Special Day Classes. iPads are the latest and greatest tool for teaching kids with special needs. If you are able, please send an iTunes Gift Card in any amount to: Covington School, Attn: Ruth Cantwell, Director, Special Ed. 201 Covington Road, Los Altos, CA 94024. It would go a long way toward supporting the 30 iPads which were donated to Special Ed last year.

Parent Information Workshop Series: Workshop #4 - Parent Project, Jr. - Loving Solutions for Tough Kids - "Responding to Our Children's Choices: Encouraging the Positive, Redirecting the Negative." Thursday, January 12th, 2012, 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., in the Multi. Parents will learn about the importance of developing effective "I Love" messages, how to use Active Listening to communicate with children and will discuss the five tips to consider before addressing problematic behavior. Refreshments will be provided and Translators will be available for Spanish and Mandarin speakers. Childcare will not be provided.

Science Fair Chair needed! The PTA is looking for one or two individuals to run the very popular Science Fair in March 2012. Work begins in January, so a Chair is needed now! This is a great job for a working parent! Without a Chair, there will be no Science Fair! Interested? Contact michelle.sturiale@gmail.com.

School and Community News

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