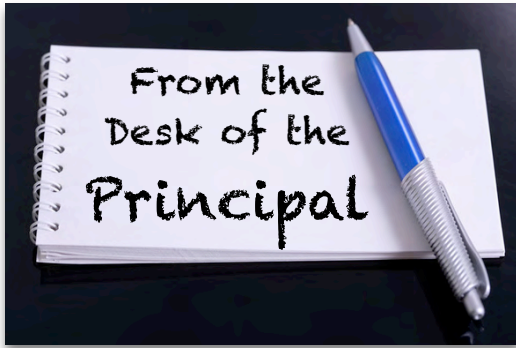




RAM TRACKS



RALSTON PTA NEWSLETTER



The 2011-2012 school year is off to a very good start! We have welcomed nine new staff members to our Ralston community and our classrooms are filled with the energy of 1,000 students. I am happy to report that all students are scheduled, classes are well underway, and hot lunch has started. Ralston is a busy place!

To kick off a smooth school year, many important events have occurred:

We held our annual "Welcome Back" assemblies on the first Monday of the school year. We took this opportunity to remind students about upcoming events, dances, sports, homework clubs, etc. Also, behavior expectations, dress code, school boundaries and safety issues were reviewed. We explained the use of the student planner, an organizational tool provided by our PTA for each student. I ask that you review the student planner and the student/parent handbook that was sent home with each child to familiarize yourself with these expectations.

We were thrilled to see such a huge turnout for Back to School Night in September. Many parents also joined us for

our 6th Grade Parent Forum. Thank you for participating in these important evenings.

The last Friday of September the Student Government hosted Ralston's largest school dance with 500 students attending. It was a wonderful evening for all!

Ralston also has a lot to offer students in the afternoons. Our Homework Club began in late September. We would like to extend a big thank you to our PTA for funding this important program. Students are busy participating in our afterschool Fall Sports—golf, volleyball and cross country. Please contact our athletic directors, Mr. Metheany, Mr. Masters or Mrs. Blackwell, if you have questions or concerns about our Sports Program. We have also started our intramural program and have opened the library to support students at lunch.

Safety, as always, is a huge priority for us. We would like to thank you for your continued support and patience with the SamTrans bus issues this year. While we haven't completely worked out all of the issues, with the cooperation of SamTrans, the buses are running much better than they were at the beginning of the year. It is truly a sight to see 500 students go to and from our school using the buses each day.

As part of our anti-Bullying campaign we are continually working to make our bus rides safe and secure for our students. This year to help with safety we have established "Grade Exclusive" buses. This means that on our 260 line, the 6th graders have their own bus. It is an articulated bus that can safely accommodate almost all of

our 6th grader riders. The other 260 buses are available for our 7th and 8th grade riders. For the 262 bus, the first is for 6th grade, the second is for 7th and the third is for 8th grade students only. By making this change, we have seen a decline in safety related incidents.

Please talk regularly with your child about their school and bus experience. If they have witnessed any bullying behavior please let the administration or a teacher know. If your student has witnessed bullying, it will be helpful to get as many details as possible. Please find out names and gender of students involved, the number of the bus and/or where the students were sitting, where the bullying occurred, and report this information to the administration. This communication between parents, students and school is important to maintain a safe environment for all.

We truly are in this middle school journey together with your children and are here to support you in any way we can to ensure the experience is positive.

We are looking forward to a fantastic year!

Sincerely,
Jennifer J. Kollmann
Principal

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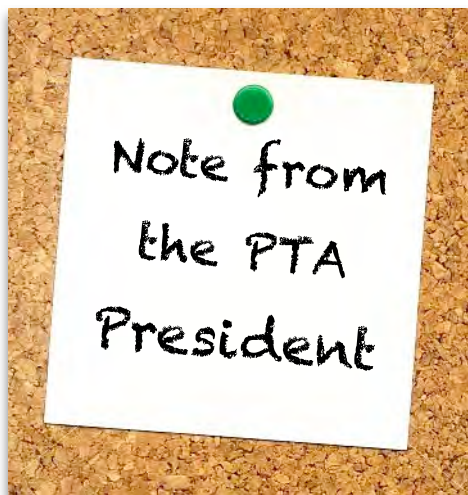
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I am delighted to report that the Ralston PTA is off to a good start! Back-to-School packets were assembled and distributed. The PTA membership drive has been a big success—so far 580 of you have joined and 402 have applied to volunteer. You have given generously to the

Ralston PTA Write-A-Check campaign, which is still underway. The Hot Lunch Program kicked off last month, and Student Government sponsored the first Ralston Dance of the school year, enjoyed by 500 of our students -- PHEW!!

A BIG THANK YOU goes to our **outstanding volunteers & participants** who have already done and given so much to benefit our students and school. These include: the PTA Board for the planning and execution of PTA business affairs and programs; Mary Beth Gray and Cindy Carrasco, Back-To-School Packet co-chairs and those who came during the summer break to assemble packets; Tracie Pon, Volunteer Coordinator, who spent hours entering volunteer data. Thanks in advance to those 402 parents who volunteered. Thank you to Annie Ferme for spearheading both Membership and Write-A-Check campaign committees; Sharin Castro and the Hot Lunch co-chairs for their thoughtful planning and execution of the lunch program – from menu selection and food ordering to organizing volunteers to serve our 1,000+ students & staff; Richard Kinsley for stepping up to run and promote the eScrip, eLabels and Nob Hill programs; and Suzanne Zaino for organizing dance chaperones so that the students could enjoy the dance safely. And...lastly, as always, thank you to our secretaries, Mrs. Laura Gosch and Mrs. Audree Payne, for their behind the scenes support.

Again, thank you for **your generosity in all areas**: time, energy and funds that you give. This makes it possible for us to support Ralston's outstanding programs. The funds are spent to purchase instructional materials for classroom teachers and programs, technology equipment, teacher support, students' binder reminders, and safety/emergency supplies. Funds are also used to provide enrichment programs such as Homework Club, After School Clubs, the Sports Program, 8th Grade Graduation Events, End-of-Year Student BBQ, Assemblies, IntraMural/Quiet Room programs, the Multi-Cultural Fair, School Communication and Publications, and Staff Appreciation.

Our next PTA meeting will be held on Thursday, October 13th at 7PM, Ralston Library. Principal Jennifer Kollmann will give us an update on school activities. Everyone is welcome to attend. It is a great way to meet other parents, stay informed about school activities and become an advocate for the students and the issues that affect them.

To learn about news or events at Ralston, be sure to visit the Ralston website. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions for making this a great year. I look forward to serving with you!

Sincerely,

Keiko Smith
2011-12 Ralston PTA President
keikosmith@yahoo.com



Cyberbullying and Middle School

What is Cyberbullying? Cyberbullying is defined as on-line social cruelty or electric bullying. All parents know that students, when online, should watch what they say and be civil to others. It is fine for parents to make that a loud and clear message. It is important to teach our students that being a good person on the computer is just as important as being a good person on the school grounds.

What to Do If there is bullying going on via the internet:

- ➔ Tell your child not to respond to any cyber bullying threats or comments; however, do not delete any of these messages. You may need the messages to verify and prove there is cyberbullying.

continued on page 3

Cyberbullying and Middle School

continued from page 2

- ➔ If there are threats of physical violence or if the bullying continues to escalate, get law enforcement involved immediately.
- ➔ Parents might want to let their kids know that if they pull this stuff, they will lose their technology privileges.
- ➔ **What should parents look out for?**
- ➔ A parent could also keep all internet capable devices out of their child's bedroom. Common areas are better for monitoring.
- ➔ One good web site that may be helpful to check on this topic of Cyber bullying is: wiredsafety.org. Facebook is the current largest social media site, but its walls can display some pretty offensive, hurtful comments if it isn't monitored. Become familiar with Facebook, in particular your child's Facebook page. Also be aware that it is not uncommon for students to create a fake name for an account if parents have curtailed their Facebook activities. The Belmont Library seems to be a frequent location for this activity.
- ➔ The popular web site www.formspring.me is of concern because students can ask questions anonymously; obviously some of the questions they ask each other can be quite hurtful.
- ➔ Remember the minimum age requirement for Facebook and Formspring is thirteen. At privacy@formspring.me student accounts will be deleted or disabled if it is found a child under this age is using their site. Facebook has a similar website for underage users.
- ➔ Discuss together with your student some online safety rules and internet uses. If they are included in the discussion, they may be more inclined to follow these rules. Talk regularly with your child about online issues. Let them know they can come to you for help if anything said is inappropriate, upsetting or dangerous. If they are bullied be supportive and understanding, find out how long it has been going on and reassure them that you'll work together to find a solution. Make certain they are not blamed for being bullied. A final suggestion from a Ralston Mother: she has put her daughter on a guest account, this allows her only a certain amount of online time per day before it shuts off automatically.

Teresa Bergin, Counselor

Student Government News

We have a great group of students together and we are in full swing planning many great activities, service projects, fundraisers, and dances.

1. The recycling committee is working on Phase 1 of incorporating a Complete Recycling Program here at Ralston. We can now include cans and plastics into our paper recycling bin. Recology presented to us on September 15th to facilitate our education of all Ralston Rams in order to recycle more efficiently. Phase 2 will be a Compost program. To implement this phase, we will definitely need PTA parents at lunch to help.....but that will be in the near future!
2. For dances, we will also be collecting candy, cookie and chip wrappers and bags to send to Terracycle, a company in New Jersey, who will pay us for each wrapper/bag.
3. We had our first Friday Lunch Activity, the classic game of Musical Chairs. There was lots of excitement and laughter.
4. The Service Committee organized a Book Drive for the Children's Project, collecting new and used books for children in need. The Book Drive ran from September 12 – 23 with students bringing in books to their Homeroom. The Homeroom with the most books won a Breakfast party! It was a huge success, with the winning homeroom collecting a staggering 800 books and runner-up classes not far behind. Way to go, Rams! All together, we collected and donated 7,000 books!
5. We had another Friday Lunch Activity on Friday, September 23. The activity was a Water Ballon Toss. It was lots of fun!
6. Friday, October 14 will be Heavenly Hats Day. Students who purchase a \$1 pass during Homeroom will be allowed to wear their hat ALL day long, even in class. All proceeds go to the Heavenly Hats Foundation, which raises money for children undergoing Cancer treatments.
7. Red Ribbon Week is October 24-28. There will be a contest and fun activities. Look for more information to come.
8. Last week's Back to School Black and White Extravaganza Dance was a huge hit with students.
9. Spirit Week was October 3-7. The themes were color! Monday was purple, Tuesday green, Wednesday pink, Thursday orange, and Friday rainbow. Students wear these colors according to the day to receive spirit points in their homeroom. Hope you joined the fun!



**Goal: \$50,000 raised by the parents of Ralston
Without one extra dollar coming out of their pockets**

Yes it's true...As a parent of an 8th grader, who has no extra money to give to the school, I invite you to take on this goal with me. **I feel it's an absolutely easy goal to achieve and I need your assistance to make it happen.**

How is this possible?

1. Sign up for Escrip at www.escrip.com. Last year over 300 people signed up and we earned a little over \$10,000. With 1,000 children at Ralston, this tells me there are probably over 1,000 parents, guardians, grandparents, aunts and uncles and other relatives that have not signed up. Over \$300 **million dollars** has been donated to non-profit organizations since Escrip's beginning. In case you are not familiar with the program, you sign up your Safeway Club card and your Credit and Debit cards on this safe and secure website. Then when you are buying your groceries at Safeway or using your Credit and Debit cards around town, a small percentage of your purchase gets donated to Ralston.
2. **Bluebird.escrip.com** is like the Daily Deals you can get from companies like Groupon. Please include your email address in your Escrip account. Twice a week you will be offered a **local deal** to buy something at a big discount. 5% of your purchase goes to Ralston. I just bought \$10 worth of fudge for \$5.
3. Do you buy grocery items like Campbell's soup, Honey Bunches of Oats or Pepperidge Farm cookies? If you said YES, please join **labels for education** sponsored by Campbell's soup. Go to www.elabelsforeducation.com. Register your Safeway club card. If you don't know the number, call Safeway (24/7) at 877-723-3929. They will give you your number. Enter it into the website. The next step is to select your school. When searching for Ralston, it's best to enter a zip code (94002) and then select Ralston Middle School. Then, when you buy any of the products listed on the website while using your Safeway Club Card, Ralston will earn points for FREE stuff like computers and athletic equipment.

A second part of the program allows Ralston to earn more points if you turn into the Ralston office the barcode label from the products (for example, the cap from any V8 bottle). I will mail them in to Campbell's to get credit for what was purchased. (The list of products can be seen by clicking "eligible products" at the bottom of the web page.)

Special promotion: for any barcode label or cap we turn in prior to 12/31/11 we get double points. So, since you are probably reading this message right now on your computer, just go to www.elabelsforeducation.com, sign up and select Ralston Middle School to earn points! (Contact family and friends to sign up their grocery club card too!) Then go to your pantry and see if you can turn in any labels NOW (and still know what the product is on your shelf.)

Who doesn't buy General Mills products? I want to support our Box Top for Education chairperson and say that General Mills will give us up to \$60,000 on an annual basis. Last year we only earned \$700. There is **lots** of room for improvement. Please turn those box tops into the envelope hanging outside of the office.

If you shop at Nob Hill, they have a program like Safeway's called the Q-card. Every time you use it at the checkout, we receive a small percentage from your purchase. If you want one, please email me at belmateo@hotmail.com and I will get you one. If you already have one, and you want to change your donation school (for example, from Sandpiper to Ralston) just go to www.raleys.com and follow the instructions.

Yes, all of these programs can earn thousands of dollars and equipment for Ralston. **It doesn't cost you anything** and that is why as your new Fundraising Coordinator, I invite you to participate so our school can have sufficient funds and equipment to support YOUR child's education.

Thanks,

Rich Kinsey

belmateo@hotmail.com

226-3666



Become part of Ralston School History

The successful Ralston Adopt-A-Book program is back. The introduction of new titles and authors to our library through your donations will add variety and broaden your student's horizons.

Participate as you like: You can cuddle up to your computer and have the convenience of purchasing on the net. Or purchase a book from the local book store. Or, if you prefer, contribute directly to the library with a check. Any way you would like to participate, it will help us towards our goal of two new books per student.

Here are the three options for Adopting A Book:

1. Go to Amazon.com's *Gifts & Wish Lists* page and enter "Ralston Middle School" in the wish list search box or copy and paste this url into your browser: <http://www.amazon.com/wishlist/21UQE97SKS1EB>
2. Shop at or go to the website for *The Reading Bug* www.thereadingbug.com,

mention the Ralston Library wish list and our school will receive credits for more books. *The Reading Bug* is at 785 Laurel Street in San Carlos; phone; 591-0100.

3. Donate \$25.00. Write checks to Ralston Middle School. Under memo write "Library."

More information is on the Ralston Library Website at <http://ralston.brssd.org/library.html>

Dedicating a book to a teacher, relative or friend makes a wonderful gift that becomes a part of the Ralston School Library.

Questions? Please call Mrs. King at 637-4880 ext. 1657 or email at mking@brssd.org

I will be publishing the names of the families who donate to the library in the Ramtracks newsletter, the Ralston Library website and in the Ralston Library under:

Friends of the Library.

Join Us!

Thank you to our first Friends of the Library this school year:

Becker-Lipton

Shimizu

King

Anonymous

Sports Update



M&M Sports K – 6th grade Basketball League

At Ralston
Middle School
Season:
Nov. 19 – Jan. 28

One-hour games on
Saturdays

For
Registration Form:
mmyouthsports.com



• **Thank you for making the Save the Music Festival a great success!** We hope your family had a blast. If you want to know more about music in our district, check out articles about Elementary School and Ralston Music Programs on the [School-Force blog](#). Check out the photos from the festival courtesy of Jeff Bartee, http://www.jeffbartee.com/School-Force/Save-the-Music-2011/19349830_Wmzsw#1512747823_2DNgn5L. The photos are free, and thank you, Jeff, for really highlighting all the musical talent we have here at Ralston!

• **It's fun to be on a winning team!** Join other School-Force volunteers and help continue our winning streak! The School-Force Team has had great success over the last few years helping Belmont-Redwood Shores schools overcome some drastic state budget cuts. We need your help to continue this excellent record. Visit <http://schoolforce.org/volunteer/> to get involved. It's a team effort!

• **Why \$1,200 per child? Where did that number come from?** It's "The Formula for Strong Schools." If all families donate at the suggested level (\$1,200 per child by June 30, 2012), we will raise over \$3.5 million, an amount that would make our schools

look like they did a few years ago: full time libraries, smaller classes in K-3 (20:1), GATE (Gifted and Talented Program) and full-time Reading Specialists.

Some can give more, others need to give less. Make your child's education a priority in your monthly budget.

• **Plan ahead and make meeting your School-Force donation goal easy!** If you start your monthly donation in October, the suggested amount in order to reach the \$1,200 level is: \$133/mo for one child or \$267/mo for two children. Visit <http://schoolforce.org/donate/> to set up your donation now.

• **Are you beginning to think about your online holiday shopping?** Don't forget to go through <http://www.shopforschools.org/schoolforce/shop.php> to earn free money for School-Force!

• **Find School-Force on Facebook** for updates about School-Force events and links to press about the BRSSD.



THE BELMONT-REDWOOD SHORES
PUBLIC SCHOOL FOUNDATION



**Carlmont Arts Council Presents:
Carlmont Arts Showcase Gala**

One night only! See all the Carlmont High School Arts programs featured in one gala event!

Reception begins at 6 pm in the Arts Building, featuring student art on display, plus complimentary hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and desserts. At 7pm, we move to the Main Stage to enjoy an evening of Dance, Drama, Vocal and Instrumental Music performed by students.

Saturday, November 5, 2011
Performing Arts Center at Carlmont High School
Tickets: \$35 Adults, \$15 Students
Includes pre-show reception & show

To order online:
<https://www.ticketturtle.com/index.php?ticketing=cac>

Carlmont Performing Arts Department Presents:

**William Shakespeare's
Twelfth Night**



One of the Bard's most beloved comedies, Twelfth Night is a tale complete with twins lost at sea, mistaken identities, bewildering desires, practical jokes, and bawdy revelry.

**November 17, 18, 19 at 7pm and
November 20th at 2 pm**

Tickets available at:
<http://www.carlmontperformingarts.com>
\$12 for Adults, \$8 for Students & Seniors



CARLMONT CORNER

8th GRADE TRANSITION INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

For 8th grade students, high school is right around the corner. Carlmont's 8th Grade Transition Information Committee, part of the PTSA, is here to provide 8th grade students and their parents information about opportunities for learning at Carlmont High School. We host a series of events for students and parents throughout the year. Please join us for our first event of the year.

8th GRADE PARENT INFORMATION NIGHT: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25 (PARENTS ONLY PLEASE)

- **Location:** Tours and Presentation are in the Carlmont High School Performing Arts Center.
- **6:00 p.m. - Campus Tours** begin in front of the Performing Arts Center. The last tour leaves from the Performing Arts Center at 6:30 p.m.
- **From 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. - Presentation** by Principal, Dr. Raul Zamora, and visits to classrooms.
- Please park in the lot by the tennis courts (2nd entrance coming from San Carlos or Belmont, across from Chula Vista). The Performing Arts Center is straight ahead at the top of the stairs.
- As time is limited, the tours will start promptly at 6:00 p.m. and the presentation at 7:00 p.m.
- Please plan to arrive early to find parking.
- Due to space constraints, this is a parent only event. Students are invited to the Student/Parent Forums and campus tours in January and February.

This event is intended to provide a broad overview of the academic program at Carlmont and will commence in the Performing Arts Center at 7:00 p.m. SHARP with a short introduction by Carlmont Principal, Dr. Raul Zamora.

Parents will then be dismissed to nearby classrooms to hear presentations from Carlmont teachers on course material and academic expectations in the four core curriculum areas: Math, Science, English, and Social Studies. Those who wish to explore electives or special programs may return to the Performing Arts Center after the classroom visits to receive information regarding: Performing and Visual Arts, Technology, Foreign Language, RSP, Special Education, AVID, Academy Programs, and Athletics.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2011-2012

Parent Information Night is the first in a series of events throughout the year which will include: Student/Parent Forums (January/February), Student Shadowing Program (information available soon), and a "Meet Carlmont" event for 6th and 7th grade families in May.

Open Enrollment: Intra-District transfer request deadline January 20, 2012

The Sequoia Union High School District currently has an Open Enrollment policy. Each family is assigned to a high school based on their home address. This is considered their "home" school. Under Open Enrollment, students may apply to attend any of the 4 high schools within the district by submitting an Intra-District Transfer Request. These MUST be returned by the deadline on January 20, 2012. Parents will be notified by March 15 if their transfer request has been approved. To find your "home" school, visit the District Website at www.seq.org (Parents & Students section).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Carlmont website: www.carlmont.seq.org (Parents/Community section)

Sequoia Union High School District website:
www.seq.org

MIDDLE SCHOOL LIAISONS

Central: Leslie Concilla Lconcilla@hotmail.com,
Ralston: Terri Murai ryley8@gmail.com
Tierra Linda, Charter, Privates: Cari McDowell
cari.mcdowell@sbcglobal.net
Ravenswood: Carrie DuBois cdubois@cbnorcal.com,
Keiko Smith keikosmith@yahoo.com

Please direct questions regarding the Carlmont Corner to Michele Carlsen at michelecarlsen@aol.com



This year is one of our biggest ones yet for the Ralston Music Program. There are over 425 students (almost half of the entire student body) involved in eight different music groups ranging from 6th grade band, orchestra and choir to advanced choir and honors band. There is also a jazz band that meets at 7am 2-3 days a week.

There are lots of exciting things for our young musicians to look forward to. The 7th and 8th graders will be taking a trip to Disneyland this spring. In addition to performing in the park they attend a workshop at a recording studio, where they learn and record a section of a film score and then hear the playback of actual Disney film clips with the musical score provided by their own ensemble. Several of the students will also be competing in the California Music Education Association (CMEA) in San Jose as well as performing in Save the Music. Our 6th grade music students will experience the most growth as musicians going from one hour a week to having it be a part of their daily schedule. The Winter Concert will be their first performance together and never ceases to amaze parents and the students themselves how far they have come in just three and a half months.

The success of our program is due to the dedication of our two music teachers, Mr. Thielen and Ms. Webster, and the hard work, generosity and donations from the parents in our Ralston Music Boosters. The Boosters provide instrument purchase and maintenance, sheet music, music stands, and trips. We liken the Boosters to an orchestra. We make up different sections of

“instruments” and if one section falls short or not all the people show up, it hurts the orchestra as it does the Boosters. The smaller sections of an orchestra such as Oboe, Bassoon or Tuba, compare to the following positions in the Boosters:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Treasurer | Anne Markle |
| Secretary | Terri Murai-Jang |
| Ice Cream Sales | Robin Peters |
| Video | Ken Lent |
| Carlmont Liaison | Melissa VanArsdel |

Medium size sections like the violas or clarinets have 1st Chairs with others in the section. Relating to the Boosters, we have the following Chairs and a full committee of volunteers working with them:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Uniform Co-chairs | Faye Tsung and Anne O'Callahan |
| Fundraiser | Leslie Marks |
| Bake Sales | Chris Choye |

Larger areas in the orchestra like the violins and flutes have 1st chairs with several others playing different musical parts within their sections. In the Boosters, we have the following committees with lots of volunteers doing different jobs for each one.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Hot Lunch | Betsy Carter, Robin Branch, Deanna Bartee |
| Disneyland | Lisa Reynolds |

As you can see, serious commitment by the faculty, the parents and the students maintains our high caliber music program.

Thank for all of your support!

Deanna Bartee
Ralston Music Boosters President



OCTOBER 2011

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|---|----------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Minimum Day | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 Staff Development Day NO SCHOOL | 11 | 12 Minimum Day | 13 PTA Meeting 7pm Ralston Library | 14 Heavenly Hats Day | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 Minimum Day AVID Field Trip to Berkeley | 20 School Site Council Meeting | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 Parent Conferences - Minimum Day | 25 Parent Conferences - Minimum Day Carlmont Info. Night for Parents | 26 Minimum Day | 27 Parent Conferences - Minimum Day Lifetouch Retake Picture Day | 28 Ms. Frey Field Trip to Sacramento | 29 |
| Red Ribbon Week | | | | | | |
| 30 | 31  Halloween | LOOKING AHEAD: November 5th - Carlmont Arts Showcase Gala November 17, 18, 19 - Carlmont Performs Twelfth Night | | | | |

Ralston Ramtracks

PTA Newsletter



RAMTRACKS



| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Principal | Jennifer Kollmann | jkollmann@brssd.org |
| PTA President | Keiko Smith | keikosmith@yahoo.com |
| Ramtracks Editors | Lisa Meltzer Penn Jacqueline Kraft | lisa@pennultimate.net kraftnow@airs.com |
| Ramtracks Distribution | Open | |