

VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Public Meeting

March 12, 2008

7:00 p.m.

Four Corners Room/Community Center

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Officer Brian Parsley gave us the latest public safety information:

- There was a case last week of a male subject riding a mountain bike who said some inappropriate things to a village resident on her way home from middle school. There are some suspects and detectives are actively investigating it. It started in front of Ocean View last Thursday at 3pm.
- Some clothing has been stolen from laundry rooms. Please make sure your laundry room door locks and don't prop it open.
- There were a couple of car thefts and a few bike thefts. If your bike is stolen, please report it.
- Officers are now ticketing vehicles in reserved parking spots that are 6 months past registration or are obviously not running (have a flat tire, for example). Residents who receive a ticket are given 30 days to remedy the situation. Cars in reserved parking spots must be registered and running.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Art Fair will be held on March 14th. We will be doing tie-dyed t-shirts. Bring an item of clothing to tie-dye, or purchase one at the Fair. Take any art your children want to display to the Village Office by March 14th.
- The Annual Health and Wellness Fair will be held on Sat, April 5th from 10am – 2pm. There will be health-related vendors, information booths, and lots of entertainment and crafts for children.
- The new Villager newsletter layout has a community calendar on the back. If you want to see any event or a particular article in the Villager, email the Resident Director.
- The Village Office is trying to clean up the outdoor areas in the Village. They are tagging hazardous items and things that are not allowed according to our rental agreement. Propane tanks are a particularly bad problem, as are items that block exits or are a falling hazard in the case of an earthquake. Residents who have items that are tagged will have 5 – 10 days to get rid of the item or move it somewhere safe.
- The VRA is offering a \$30 gift card in a random drawing for residents of the Village who post on the new Village Message Board at <http://groups.google.com/group/albanyvillage>. The Message Board is a great way to sell or buy items in the Village.
- Certified hypnotherapist, Lauren Webb, is offering a workshop on meditation and guided hypnosis. She will talk about how hypnotherapy can help address stress and resolve

issues (relationships, health problems, etc.). There is a \$15 fee. No registration required. Bring a pillow and blanket.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Linda Baker, the enrollment specialist for Albany Unified School District, spoke with us about the process of enrolling a child in kindergarten:

- It is a two-step process.
 - First, you walk into the school district office at 904 Talbot, and take your Village rental agreement and a birth certificate or ID for your child.
 - Second, you wait until April 7th and then fill out some forms about which school you want, whether you prefer AM or PM, immunization information, and so on. Then you make an appointment or drop by to return those forms.

NOTE: the following is a more detailed explanation of the registration process from a previous VRA meeting, in Feb, 2007. Dates are not accurate, but the basic idea of how to go about registering a child in school is still current.

ENROLLING CHILDREN IN ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Linda Baker, the enrollment specialist for Albany Unified School District, spoke to us about enrolling children in school. Linda has been with the district for 16 years and is entirely in charge of managing the data for students in the district. She first described the process of enrollment, and then answered questions. Following is a summary of her presentation:

Open Enrollment

The most important thing to know about enrollment in schools in Albany is that it is not based on geography. This means that someone who lives close to one school can still have their children assigned to another school. Although every effort is made to make everyone happy, sometimes people still do not get their first choice school. Here is how the process works for enrolling children in school for the first time:

1. Between April 22 and May 13, parents of new kindergarteners or other students who will be beginning school in the fall, will go to the District Office (at 904 Talbot Ave. in Albany) to fill out the initial paperwork. It does not matter if you are first in line on April 22 – you still may or may not get your first choice school. All applications are given the same consideration, regardless of the order in which they were filed. When you first come to district office to register your child in school, you should bring:
 - A copy of your University Village lease (rental contract)
 - The child's *original* birth certificate. If you are from another country, the child's passport will suffice.

2. When you fill out the initial paperwork, you will be given an opportunity to specify your first choice school and time, your second choice school and time, etc. For some families the time is the most important aspect – they might choose Ocean View morning kindergarten first, and Cornell morning kindergarten second. Others might prefer a specific school, regardless of the time. Think carefully about your preferences and be sure to fill in all the options because you might not get your first choice school. There is also a place to write a note about why you want that school. Don't skip this section because it might make a difference in how your child is assigned.
3. After May 13, the district will mail out all the further paperwork that needs to be filled out. Among the requirements are immunization records, doctor and dentist exams, and so forth.
4. Before the end of June, all the principals in the district will sit down and decide which children will go to which school.
5. Parents will be notified by the beginning of July which school their child will be attending.

For more information about open enrollment, please attend an informational meeting at 7:00 pm, Thursday, February 15, at Cornell Elementary School (in the multipurpose room). There will be a lot of very useful information provided at that meeting.

Questions & Answers

Q: Are there any tests to get into kindergarten? If so, are exceptions ever made?

A: The only "test" is that the child must be 5 years old by December 2 of the year that he or she will be starting kindergarten. It is very, very rare that exceptions are made to this rule. If your child's birthday is within a couple of days, it might be possible. In this instance, contact the district office.

Q: What is the likelihood that my child will be accepted to Ocean View Elementary School?

A: It really is impossible to say because it depends on so many factors. For instance, if there is a lot of demand for Ocean View and not as many openings as requests, more students won't get their first choice. Children are always placed in the same school as their siblings if that is the parent's first preference.

Q: My child is already enrolled in an Albany school. What do I need to do to continue enrollment?

A: Nothing. Children are automatically re-enrolled in the school that they have been previously attending. Unless you want to change schools, you don't need to do anything.

Q: What if I have another question and I want to contact you?

A: Email me at linda@albany.k12.ca.us or call me at 510-558-3765.

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CHILDCARE AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Susan Stevenson, the director of Albany Children's Center, spoke to us about the childcare and after-school care that they offer:

- In our district we have:
 - 1 preschool (children must be 3 years old & potty-trained)
 - 1 special day program
 - 5 after-school programs that serve k-5th grade
- In total, we provide after-school care to 450 children.
- Our programs, by location, are:
 - Marin Elementary—Two Below (Spanish-based)
 - Cornell Elementary—Chinese language program
 - Ocean View Elementary—Cedars (science-based) and a Chinese language program
 - University Village Community Center—Maples (art-based)
- The process to enroll is to go to our website, fill out an application, and send it in. That will put you on a waiting list. You may also go in person to the Albany Children's Center office at 800 Red Oak Ave. to fill out the paperwork
- For preschool there is approximately a 1 ½ year wait in order to get in. The preschool qualifies as a Head Start program and offers subsidized low-income care. It also provides full cost, non-subsidized care for families who do not qualify as low-income.
- Priority is given to low-income families and siblings of children already in the program.
- We choose families off the waiting list according to first-come-first-serve, however, we also have quotas of types of children we need to have, so those families may end up being selected first. For example, if we have a 4th grader leave, then we will need to replace him/her with another 4th grader to keep our class sizes as they should be.
- You may send in an application to get on the waiting list for your child even if he or she is not yet old enough to attend. Please register as soon as possible if you think your child might need childcare in the future.
- If you don't get in, you can call an organization called Bananas that helps parents find good childcare for their children. Their phone number is 510-658-7353 and their website is: www.bananasinc.org.

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