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**Marisa Coon**  
**Nathalie Humphry**

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**Debbie Farmer**

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Jog-a-thon:  
**Kathi Vaughn**  
**Wendy Gray**

Silent Auction:  
**Jammie Ritchey**

At Large Member :  
**Laura Bregman**

At Large Member:  
**Emma Ehrlich**

Principal:  
**Sandy McClure**

Teacher Representatives:  
**Breanna Haling**  
**Marcie Templin**



Volume 11 Issue 5

February, 2011  
Sherri Teague, Editor  
sherriteague@gmail.com

## Message from the Principal



Thanks so much to all of our parents who came to our budget meeting. It was a good opportunity for me to hear your questions and concerns, and I got a lot of really good ideas on how we can make our funding priorities a reality for our students. I would like to continue this dialogue, and we will be creating a "Survey Monkey" over the next few weeks that we will send out to our families. Your feedback is always appreciated, and your ideas offer a wider and more balanced view of what is in the best interest of our students.

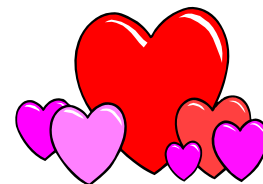
Welcome back to Ms. Averkamp. She is an amazing teacher who is returning to complete the year in Room 13. We were sad to say goodbye to Ms. Mitchell who has taken another position in our district, but we are so happy to have Ms. Averkamp join us. Ms. Averkamp has been a resident substitute for us, and two years ago she taught first grade at Silver Gate. I hope you have an opportunity to introduce yourself to her and welcome her to our great school.

The days will begin to lengthen and your children will have more time to spend outdoors. Softball and base-

ball season are upon us, and homework and routines can be difficult to maintain. It can be a good time to think about your busy schedules and make adjustments where needed, but try to maintain your successful routines. If the writing and calculating portions of homework can be done prior to practices and dinner, there is generally more success. Save independent reading and parent reading for the end of the evening and use this as an opportunity to slow down and get ready for a good night's sleep.

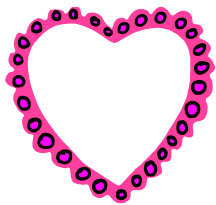
We are quickly moving through another year; we are already half-way done with another school year. As always, I appreciate all of your support; together, we're making a wonderful school for all students!

Sandy McClure  
Principal, Silver Gate Elementary  
619-222-1139 ph 619-226-3058 fax



Hospitality:  
**Karen Howse**  
**Kira Stofer**  
 Sally Foster  
 Fundraiser Chair:  
**Laura Goodwin**  
 Jog-a-thon:  
**Kathi Vaughn**  
**Wendy Gray**  
 Gator Night Out Chair:  
**Amanda Jewell**  
**Jamie Nolan**  
 Directory:  
**Lisa Gray**  
 Newsletter:  
**Sherri Teague**  
 Yearbook:  
**Mary Jo Finley**  
**Dee Patty**  
 Red Ribbon Week Chair:  
**Erika Olsen**  
 Book Fair Chair:  
**Deb Coleman**  
**LeeAnn Lintz**  
 Gator Olympics Chair:  
**JudyAnne Snyder**  
 School Merchandise Chair:  
**Leslie Chinman**  
**Michelle Young**  
 Tile Project Chair:  
**Carlin Guidi**  
 Harvest Festival Chair:  
**Angie Keus**  
**Amy Lord**  
 Costume Fair  
**Kristen Jimenez**  
 Staff Appreciation Week:  
**Leslie Slakoff**  
 Site Beautification Chair:  
**Julie Cegelski**  
 E-Reminders/Webmaster:  
**Debbie Ybarra**  
 Fresh & Easy/Macy's  
**Jody Pyatt**  
 Community Partners Chair:  
**Michelle Basnight**  
 Coffee Sale Chair:  
**Arielle Sykes**  
 Box Tops:  
**Brenda Azer**  
 eScrip:  
**Valerie Miller**  
**Amy Simms**  
 Garden Gators:  
**Loc Leute**  
 Visual Information:  
**Bridget Schoeffel**  
 Go Green Team:  
**Jody Hawkins**

## Presidents' Message



2011 is off and running and the school year is well into the second trimester. Where does the time go?

As many of you have done, we too have made our New Year's resolutions. With looming budget cuts pending, it is our goal to continue to fund the (ever growing) gap between what the state of California and district provide for Silver Gate, and what we feel our children deserve for their education. We have met with Mrs. McClure, the School Site Council, and the staff, and feel certain that Friends of Silver Gate will be able to maintain the level of academic excellence we want for our children. We are grateful to be in a community where administration, staff and parents work side by side, always putting the students' best interests first.

If it were not for your incredible generosity of time, talent and money, we would not be able to provide many basic necessities, let alone all of the wonderful enrichments that are available for our children. We hope that one of your New Year's resolutions is to continue to volunteer your time at Silver Gate. It is wonderful to see all of you volunteering time in classrooms, coming to meetings, and organizing different events for our school. We are so fortunate to be a part of such an amazing community.

We'd like to extend a special thank you to Kathi Vaughn and Wendy Gray for putting together a very successful Jog-a-thon! It ended up being a perfect day for the kids to run and everyone had a wonderful time. There were parents and teachers running side by side with their children, and cheering from the sidelines. There were even a few future Silver Gators out there toddling along. If you see any of these women around campus, please thank them for the time and energy they put into making this event so enjoyable for everyone.

Please take the time to be informed of the facts involved in the proposed budget cuts. We encourage you to sit in on a Principal's Chat, a School Site Council meeting, or an FSG meeting. Being involved will only help us to be better advocates for our children. Our next FSG Meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Silver Gate Library. We hope to see you there.

Thank you again for your continued support!

With our Sincerest Appreciation,  
 Arielle Sykes, Nathalie Humphry, Marisa Coon

### 2010-2011 FSG Meeting Schedule

September 13 @ 6:30 p.m.	October 6th @ 7:45 a.m.
November 3rd @ 6:30 p.m.	December 1st @ 7:45 a.m.
January 5th @ 6:30 p.m.	February 2nd @ 7:45 a.m.
March 2nd @ 6:30 p.m.	April 6th @ 7:45 a.m.
May 4th @ 6:30 p.m.	June TBA



## *Notes from the Coach's Clipboard*

First, I would like to recognize our first 100 mile runner..... Master Broy McClure. Broy received his trophy and 100 mile token. He can be seen working up a sweat just about every morning out on the Silver Gate running track. Keep up the good job Broy, you're a role model for a hard worker.

The world lost a beautiful person recently. Ms. Jean Byrd taught here at Silver Gate when I arrived about eighteen years ago. When we met, she looked me in the eye and gave a firm handshake-I liked her immediately. Jean did not hold back at staff meetings and was a graduate of the Sherry Case School of Assertiveness. There was no one on our staff that did not like and respect Jean Byrd. She was "old school" firm with her students and they loved her. About ten years ago, Jean moved on to another assignment to work with disadvantaged children that were experiencing difficulty in math. I missed her infectious laugh and warm smile that lit up her face. Now I will miss everything about her, but I won't forget. I'll never forget!

We have some new third graders who are working on learning how to ride the unicycle. I am so proud of those kids that stuck with it and learned to ride. It says a lot about their willingness to work hard to get what they want.... a great life lesson.

Y-tie monies have allowed me to order some new equipment. We will be receiving new bean bags (hand-eye coordination), football flags, new tetherballs, two brand new unicycles, and a variety of balls for different purposes. Next week, we will be starting a three week unit on ball skills. Along with jumping rope, I believe ball handling is one of the most important skills to be learned in elementary physical education. It develops hand-eye coordination, an understanding of the principles of force, kinesthetic muscle memory, and confidence. If you have a bouncing ball at home, please get it out and play with your child.....dribbling, rolling back and forth, bounce passing, chest passing.....all will help in their development. Have a super February and good luck with those resolutions.

Geoff McCloud aka "Coach"

### **Upcoming Silver Gate Events**

**2/14-2/27—Pigtails & Crewcuts Haircuts for Kids. Pigtails & Crewcuts will donate 20% of all services purchased between 2/14-2/27 to FSG.**

**2/18—Dad's & Donuts—7:15 a.m. in the Auditorium. We honor the families that are unique so if you cannot bring a dad invite an uncle, grandfather or a family friend.**

**2/18—Student Council's Pajama Day.**

**2/22-2/25—Girl Scout Troop 3639 Food Drive—Benefits San Diego Food Bank — Look for collection barrels at school.**

**2/21—Holiday—Washington's Birthday**

**3/7—FSG Morning Grind**

**3/13—Spring Ahead: Daylight Savings Time begins.**





## Important Traffic Reminder:

- DO NOT leave your car at any time when stopped in the drop-off zones on Venice St. and Catalina Blvd.
- Never drive faster than 15mph in front of the school.
- Never back-up or make a U Turn within 500 feet of our school.
- Pull as far forward on the curb to drop off your child
- Never cross the street outside of a cross walk.
- Do not use the alley at any time.
- No parking southwest bound on Venice St.

## Go Green Lunch Box Fundraiser

The Silver Gate Go Green Committee would like to offer a great fundraiser for the school and a wonderful way to have a no-waste lunch box. Laptop lunch boxes and Goodbyn lunch boxes offer great products to reduce waste. Laptop Lunches is offering a 10% coupon code and will donate 10% of all purchases back to our school. Goodbyn is donating \$5 back to Silver Gate for every lunch box purchased through our Silver Gate code (1449). These fundraisers will last all year so they can be bought at your convenience. Many Silver Gators own these lunch boxes and they are great! Simply go to:

[www.laptoplunches.com](http://www.laptoplunches.com) or [www.goodbyn.com](http://www.goodbyn.com) and enter the codes at check out. Go Green!!



## Help us help our school

We've discovered a terrific way to raise funds for our school. It's super-easy, and all you have to do is use your Target® Visa® or Target® Card. We will receive a percentage of the amount of each purchase in the form of a cash donation from Target through the Take Charge of Education® program. It's easy. Just visit [target.com/tcoe](http://target.com/tcoe), or call 1-800-316-6142 to designate our school. So if you're going to Target anyway, please consider using your Target® Visa® or Target® Card. Big thanks to those who are already doing their part to make a great school even better. Silver Gate has received over \$6,000 from Target since this program began. Find out how much money our school has already received this year at [target.com/tcoe](http://target.com/tcoe). Grandparents, alumni, neighbors and friends can take part, too.



**TAKE CHARGE OF EDUCATION®**



## Stay Informed!

Log onto [www.silvergateschool.com](http://www.silvergateschool.com) for the most updated school information.

You also have the choice of having news sent directly to your email account. Sign up today for e-Reminders and receive weekly Silver Gate News updates that are loaded with information to start your week off right.

- Visit us on [www.facebook.com/silvergatesfg](http://www.facebook.com/silvergatesfg) and "Like it" to get regular status updates.
- Sign up for e-blasts on [www.pointlomacluster.com](http://www.pointlomacluster.com).

# eScrip

## What Is eScrip?

eScrip is a hassle-free way for schools and groups that support children's programs to raise funds through everyday purchases made at eScrip merchants.

## How Does it Work?

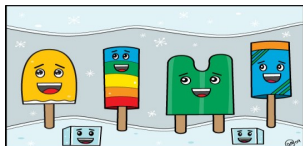
eScrip and merchant partners have created a system that rewards customer loyalty by contributing a percentage of purchases to your chosen group.

Parents, teachers, friends and families are encouraged to register their credit, debit and grocery club cards as supporters with the eScrip program. Upon receipt of registration, a percentage of all purchases made at eScrip merchants will be given back to the designated school or group.

### Simple Registration:

- Log on to [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) and go to "sign up".
- Designate your favorite school or children's group to receive contributions.
- Register your grocery club card from a participating merchant and your debit/credit cards.

**That's it! Visit eScrip merchants to shop and earn.**



## Earn Cash for Our School!



Students, please turn in your Box Tops by Friday, February 18th.

The classroom who turns in the most Box Tops will win a Popsicle

Party! Remember, Box Tops help earn money for Silver Gate!

Brenda Azer, Box Top Coordinator

# Gators Go Green...



Hi Go Green Gators!! As some of you have noticed we have scaled back in our recycling efforts! I think there was too much for the kids to try to remember to recycle and I haven't been able to be present during lunch to remind them.

We are now only recycling ZIPLOCKS, DRINK POUCHES, LUNCHABLES, WINE CORKS, and INK CARTRIDGES. We've been recycling the batteries through the district, but as some may have noticed, they don't pick up as much as we need them to. I will run this new program to see how our efforts to recycle go for the next few weeks. Thank you to everyone who is continuing to promote an Eco environment at school as well as at home, every effort is a step into a less wasteful world! I want to thank Dee Patty for her presence at lunch on Thursdays - its much appreciated!

Happy Recycling! Questions/comments, let me know. [hawkboys@cox.net](mailto:hawkboys@cox.net)

Jody Hawkins

Your Silver Gate "Go Green Girl"





FSG Fundraising  
February 2011



	Income	COGS	Net Profit by Event	Net Profit in Budget
After-school pro-	3,150.00	-	3,150.00	\$ 3,700.00
Annual Giving Fund	16,560.00	159.78	16,400.22	\$ 19,900.00
Art to Remember	5,876.00	4,460.20	1,415.80	\$ -
Box Tops	872.81	0.00	872.81	\$ 1,000.00
Coffee Sales - Ryan	2,197.00	1,324.00	873.00	\$ 1,500.00
Community Partners	2,005.09		2,005.09	\$ 650.00
Costume Faire	1,617.00	120.41	1,496.59	\$ 750.00
Directory	557.50	-	557.50	\$ 100.00
E-Scrip	3,894.66	-	3,894.66	\$ 4,500.00
Harvest Festival	14,437.76	5,016.09	9,421.67	\$ 8,500.00
Holiday Boutique	365.60	0.00	365.60	\$ 300.00
Holiday Tree Sales	6,084.22	4,800.00	1,284.22	\$ -
Jog-A-Thon	Stay tuned! Jog-A-Thon totals com-			\$ 21,800.00
Macy's Shop for a	1,065.00	-	1,065.00	\$ 2,000.00
Sally Foster	7,835.53	2,928.00	4,907.53	\$ 7,000.00
T-Shirt Sales	3,469.00	2,028.57	1,440.43	\$ 1,500.00
Tile Project	270.00	-	270.00	\$ 550.00
Yearbook	4,454.00	-	4,454.00	\$ -
	\$	\$		
<b>Total Income</b>	74,711.17	20,837.05	<b>\$ 53,874.12</b>	\$ 73,750.00

Thank you to all our amazing families who participate and contribute to our school through fundraisers and events! Because of all of you, FSG is ahead of budget on almost EVERY Fundraiser-to-date!

- Harvest Festival made nearly \$10,000 for our school! \$1,350 more than planned!
- Keep turning in those little Box Tops! You can see that they add up... we've earned close to \$900 for Silver Gate, just by redeeming Box Tops!
- E-Scrip has nearly reached it's Annual Goal in the first 6 months of the Fiscal (School) Year! So keep using those Vons cards and E-Scrip registered credit cards!
- Stay tuned next month for fundraising results on the Holiday Tree Sales and Jog-A-Thon!

Thanks again to everyone for helping to make Silver Gate a great place to learn!!



# Annual Giving Fund

*“Funding the Gap between Status Quo and Excellence”*

<b>AS OF 1/15/11:</b>	
<b>We're up to \$17,495 in donations!</b>	
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>STILL NEEDED</b>	<b>\$2,505</b>

**Many thanks to the following families for their generous contributions to the 2010-2011 Annual Giving Fund:**

**Gator Patron \$1,000 – \$3,499**

The Ticho Family  
 The Melhorn Family  
 Mr. Benjamin's Cotillion  
 The Byrne Family  
 The Harris Family  
 The Emerson Family

**Gator Contributor \$600 - \$900**

The Kuhn Family  
 The Engel Family  
 Robert Giebink  
 The Dong Family  
 The Bumer-Russell-Caswell Family

**Gator Friends \$300-\$599**

The Farmer Family  
 The Kiyohara Family  
 The Snyder Family  
 The Sykes Family  
 The Humphry Family  
 The Schuster Family  
 The McNeice Family  
 The Bennett Family  
 The Denney Family  
 The Basnight Family

**Gator Donors \$1-\$299**

Anne Collins and Mike Pugh  
 Mittie Fisher  
 The Helbling Family  
 The Brown Family  
 The Russell Family  
 The VonColln Family  
 The Kuhlken Family  
 The Ravalette Family  
 The Gallagher Family  
 The Armstrong Family  
 The Murray Family  
 Lauren Brown  
 Elena Gallagher  
 The Squillaro Family  
 The Rhea Family  
 The Simon/Holmes Family  
 The Graulich Family  
 The Plum Family  
 The Bennett Family  
 The Chrisman Family  
 The Golik Family  
 The Barber Family  
 Darryl & Dorothy Patty

## Questions about the Annual Giving Fund?

Please contact Debbie Farmer ([svoasis@yahoo.com](mailto:svoasis@yahoo.com)) .

## Night Life 80's

### Silent Auction Fundraiser

We are asking for your help with this year's big fundraiser, 'Night Life 80's' Silent Auction. The 16th Annual Dinner, Dancing, and Bidding Event will take place at the Liberty Station Conference Center on Friday, May 6 at 5:30 p.m.

This is Silver Gate's biggest fundraiser – last year we brought in over \$47,000 net! 100% of this money goes toward your children's education at Silver Gate. It helps pay for our Librarian, Eco-Lab Teacher, Computer Lab Teacher, Push-In Teachers, and more. But we can't do this without the generous help of the entire Silver Gate community.

- **Who:** Friends of Silver Gate's Biggest Annual Fundraiser of the Year!
- **What:** Dinner, Dancing, Silent Auction fundraising party with fellow Silver Gate Parents. It's SO MUCH fun!
- **When:** Friday, May 6, 2011 at 5:30pm-11:30pm
- **Where:** Liberty Station Conference Center– 2600 Laning Ave, San Diego, CA 92106
- **Why:** This is the most exciting way to be involved with your child's school. It gives you the chance to get a night out without the kids and enjoy the company of all the other parents, teachers, and staff in the Silver Gate community!
- **Don't Worry:** We always offer an opportunity to drop off the kids (all ages) at one of our cool after-school partners (in case you can't get a babysitter).

**How:** There are many ways to get involved! Please look below to see what works best for you!

**50/50 Opportunity Drawing:** Purchase a \$10 ticket and get a chance to win a portion of the net profits from these sales (often up to \$1,500)! Tickets go on sale soon!

**Attendance:** Tickets are \$65.00 per person – which includes Hosted Cocktail hour and Preview Event, Dinner and Auction or \$45.00 per person for Dinner and Auction. Purchase a table of 10 or 12 for all your friends!

**Donations:** Do you know a business that could donate something we could auction off? Do you own a business who could donate something?

**Classroom Baskets:** Ask your child's teacher what the theme is for your classroom's basket. Donate an item that falls within that theme.

**Classroom Art Projects:** Ask your room parent or teacher how you can help get involved with the amazing art projects that are produced by each classroom to be auctioned off at the event!

**Sponsorships:** Become a Sponsor and donate from \$100 to \$1,000. Different sponsor levels receive different benefits, if you have not donated to the Annual Fund, now is the time (perfect for a tax write-off) and you could receive extra benefits depending upon the amount of your donation!

**Advertising:** Promote your company in the Silent Auction Bid Book and write-off your media expense! Advertisements are available from \$50.00 to \$200.00.

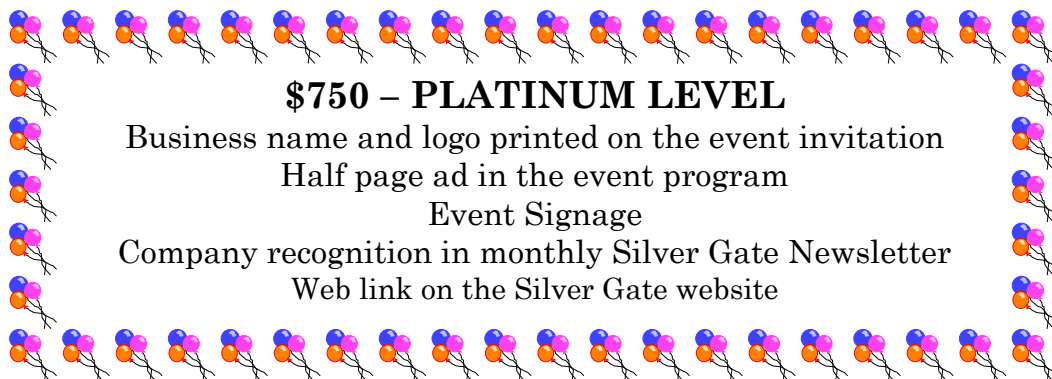
Please contact Jammie Ritchey for more information [jammieritchey@yahoo.com](mailto:jammieritchey@yahoo.com)

The Silent Auction is a really great way to get to know fellow Silver Gators and form friendships that will last a lifetime! Please come to the next meeting, Wednesday, January 24 at 6:30 p.m. at 3255 McCall St, 92106. If you have any questions, please feel to e-mail Jammie Ritchey, Silent Auction Chairperson, at [jammieritchey@yahoo.com](mailto:jammieritchey@yahoo.com).

# Silent Auction 2011 Sponsorship Levels



**\$1000 – DIAMOND LEVEL**  
Business name and logo printed on event invitation  
Full page advertisement in event program  
Event Signage  
Company recognition in monthly Silver Gate Newsletter  
Web link on the Silver Gate website



**\$750 – PLATINUM LEVEL**  
Business name and logo printed on the event invitation  
Half page ad in the event program  
Event Signage  
Company recognition in monthly Silver Gate Newsletter  
Web link on the Silver Gate website



**\$350 – GOLD LEVEL**  
Quarter page ad in event program  
Company recognition in monthly Silver Gate Newsletter  
Business Name and Logo listed on Silver Gate website  
2 tickets to the 2011 Silent Auction



**\$100- GATOR LEVEL**  
Recognition in the event program



AND



PRESENTS

**Silver Gate Elementary School  
FUNdraiser**

**Saturday, March 12th 2011**

Boomers! San Diego 6999 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego. CA 92111 (858) 560-4212

LOOK FOR THE FLYER IN YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK AND THEN COME TO THE Clairemont Boomers on March 12<sup>th</sup> to purchase Unlimited Go-Karts, Bumper Boats, Miniature Golf, and the Kids County Fair Rides\*\*!

**Park Price: \$27.95**

**YOUR PRICE: Only \$16.95**

*One price for everyone*

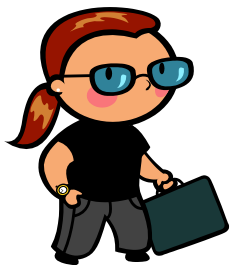
*20% goes back to our school*

**\*\*All rides have restrictions: Driver of a go kart must be 58" or taller. A passenger has to be between 40-58". A driver of a passenger must be at least 18 years of age. Driver of bumper boats must be 44" or taller. A passenger has to be between 40"-44". A driver of a passenger must be at least 18 years of age. The kids county fair rides require riders to be at least 36" (42" for the ferris wheel).**

**Also available is a token special. Purchase from the golf counter \$5.00 in tokens and receive 10 bonus tokens. That's 30 tokens for \$5.00**

**Exclusively for schools! Teachers Bonus!**

Teachers will make this fundraiser a success, and we want to recognize and reward their hard work. All teachers who attend the fundraiser will receive a FREE MEAL, courtesy of Boomers! Teachers must present school ID and can choose from any of our combo meals.



## MOMMY'S BRIEFCASE

by Jennifer L. Kammerer (Kole and Konner's Mom)

### Where Should I Store My Estate Planning Documents?

Often, when a client contacts me to administer the estate of a loved one, they are unable to locate the estate planning documents. Searching someone's home, trying to locate a Will or Trust, is time consuming and costly. If you have taken the time to prepare your estate plan, please take a few minutes to notify your trustees or executors, (responsible persons, ["RP"], who you select to distribute your estate when you pass on), where the documents can be found. If no one knows where to find your documents, how will anyone know, or be able to legally enforce, your wishes?

#### Accessibility

In addition to informing your RP where to find your estate planning documents, make sure they are able to access the documents. For example, if you keep your documents in a safe deposit box, make sure to add your RP as a signatory for the box, as well as, provide them with a key. Otherwise, your RP may have to obtain a court order, before they can access your documents.

#### Fire-Proof and Destruction-Proof Safe

If you keep your documents in a fire proof safe, make sure your RP has the combination, key, or location of such items. If you change anything with regard to the location and/or access of your documents, make sure you notify your RP of the change, immediately.

I also advise my clients to purchase a fire-proof and water proof safe, which will not incinerate the box's contents. (One client informed me, "fire proof", does not mean "destruction proof", with regard to the contents of the box. Check with the Fire Department for specifications, in purchasing a fire-proof and destruction-proof box.)

#### Privacy

Last, I advise my clients to keep their Will and Trust private. It might make sense to provide your RP with a copy of your documents now; however, what if your RP marries someone who asserts undue influence? What if you marry or "partner" with someone, who you prefer to name as your new RP? What if you change the distributions to your beneficiaries? What if they are not equal distributions? Keep it simple. Keep it private. Keep it up to date!

#### DISCLAIMER

This information is designed to provide a general overview with regard to the subject matter covered. The author and publisher and host are not providing legal, accounting, or specific advice to your situation. You should consult with the professional advisors of your choice for specific advice.



# Po Bronson takes on the Tiger Mom

The NurtureShock author talks about how Amy Chua got it wrong -- and how American parents can get it right.

By Leslie Crawford—[www.greatschools.org](http://www.greatschools.org)



In 2009, Po Bronson's book (co-authored with educator Ashley Merryman), *NurtureShock*, rocked the parenting world, presenting a new body of scientific evidence that upended many of our most cherished notions about child-rearing. Now another book is sending moms and dads into new spasms of parenting doubt.

Baring her tiger mom claws in her best-selling memoir, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, Amy Chua makes the audacious claim that if American parents would follow her iron-fisted "Chinese mother" approach, their kids would be straight-A, concerto-playing, super-achievers like her two daughters. Her timing couldn't have been better. Chua's book appeared on the heels of the recent revelation that American students are scoring dramatically lower in key academic subjects than children in countries like China and South Korea, according to the international comparative PISA tests. "America's number-one status is no longer so apparent," says Bronson. "That has opened the door to an international perspective."

That American parents are responding to Chua's take-no-prisoners' method makes perfect sense, says Bronson. "American mothers and fathers are dying for permission to be a little tougher on their kids," Bronson wrote recently in *New York Magazine*. Bronson argues that the controversy, while understandable, has created a breeding ground for cultural misconceptions. Chua's self-proclaimed old-fashioned Confucian-style parenting "is no longer the norm in China." In fact, he says, many American parents who are suddenly wondering if they need to get tougher with their seemingly undisciplined, under-achieving kids have "misinterpreted" the Chinese method, which is looking more and more like "Western" parenting.

GreatSchools talked with Bronson about the tiger mother phenomenon and whether we have reason to worry that, once again, we're doing it all wrong.

## **Why are people saying they they're horrified by Amy Chua's parenting techniques, but meanwhile buying her book in droves?**

I don't think parents are reading the book because they want to imitate that kind of maniacal drive to push your child. What they are responding to is the tension between the self-esteem movement and putting more pressure on your child. . . . Parents are tired of the constant cheerleading we're expected to do. It feels hollow and vacant to be doing it, and people suspect it's not really helping the kids.

The misunderstanding is why kids today feel pressure. There's a stereotype of the pressuring parent. But you don't see it that often. . . . Very often, kids are feeling pressure even when parents aren't giving them pressuring comments. The pressure and depression our kids are feeling is the result of feeling like high expectations have been set for them, but they haven't been taught the steps to get there. Kids get nervous about what kind of college they'll get into. . . . But one thing they aren't told is, "This is what you have to do to get there." Your kid brings home a B+. You don't have to praise them or criticize them. The parent whose kid feels so much pressure and says, "You're doing fine, don't worry about it" – that doesn't reduce the kid's stress. What kids want is to know how to do better.

## **So we should be asking more of our children – getting stricter with them and less indulgent and permissive?**

I don't want parents drilling their kids, out of context, with flash cards. You don't have to push. Amy Chua was pushing them with a firm hand to the piano keys and violin. Harshness and cruelty never have to be part of it. This is where we get into this false tradeoff: where we have to be this cuddly parent who is always encouraging and praising – and the alternative is the harsh and cruel Amy Chua-type person. We can be kind, smile, be affectionate, and never raise our voice, even as we lead our kids to do better. Even when I've talked with Amy personally, she told me those moments did happen. She did cuddle. But she didn't write about it.

## How do you explain the recent high PISA scores of students in Shanghai? Do those kids all have tiger mothers and fathers?

Let's be clear: Those kids who got great scores in Shanghai? Amy Chua is not their mother! The mothers are affectionate and loving. Studies of these kids say they are egocentric and given everything they want. They are told to do well, but they aren't experiencing cruel and harsh parenting. They're treated kindly. And the schools have gotten rid of drill-and-kill testing. They've adopted problem-based learning curriculum techniques that they learned by coming to the U.S. and training in [our methods].

She thinks she is. But most Chinese are saying, "That's not us." There's a mass generational shift, whether you're talking about Japanese or Korean or Chinese. U.N. reports from 15 years ago said more than half of Chinese parents were willing to beat a child for not doing well on an examination. By 1998, that changed. Scholars are seeing modern Chinese mothers as affectionate. They smile at their kids every bit as much as American kids and are no more likely to frown or raise their voice.

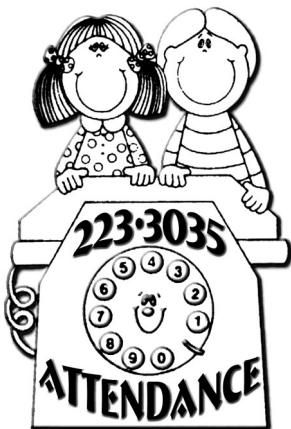
## If you could give Chua any parenting advice, what would it be?

I don't like to critique any person's parenting style. But if someone wanted to copy Chua's style, I think most people would say, "Let your child go to the bathroom and you don't have to practice if you are high on dental drugs." But the threatening?

[My] advice is about risks: that our kids need to learn to be risk takers . . . and what Amy did was over-protective parenting. I think Amy Chua's style only works if you want your child to play the violin or piano. It doesn't work beyond those two instruments. Creativity is going to be more and more prized.

## Yes, you recently wrote an article about creativity going down in U.S. students.

We don't know why [creative thinking] is going down. Scholars are pointing to video games, testing, but in *NurtureShock* we talked about sleep, the lost hour of sleep. Tests show that with a lost hour of sleep, kids do terrible at creativity tests.



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