

# Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

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At PRESIDENT BRIAN's request, TOM GRACON led the pledge. EJ HONG spoke up as a Visiting Rotarian, having misplaced her badge, a "Former President" badge at that, and joined the President's Club for truancy for some time past. BRIAN granted clemency and accepted the donation. We then welcomed a bona fide Visiting Rotarian from the San Mateo Club, Walt McCulloch. MIKE BAIRD introduced his guest Sabina Kroes; STEVE PLAYER's guest was Roger Stuhlmuller.



Having recently completed 13 years as a Trustee of the Foothill-DeAnza Community Colleges, BETSY BECHTEL devoted her Opening Remarks to "Closing the Achievement Gap", proudly noting that more local high school grads attend Foothill than any other college and Foothill has the highest transfer rate to 4-year colleges of all the community colleges serving 2.9 million California students. With counseling, tutoring, courses like "Math My Way", and working closely with Eastside, see below, Foothill gets closer to bridging the achievement gap.



BRIAN invited attendance at the Club's holiday party, 6:00 PM December 7 at the home of Patricia McGuigan and DICK BUSH, 1530 Waverly Street, Palo Alto. BERT ROSE, Club Member since 1972, joined the President's Club in recognition that November 11 had been a momentous event both for WW I and his undoubtedly newly proud parents.



(At the close of the meeting DICK FREEMAN led us in singing "Happy Birthday" (to our newest 90-year old.)

The Program, Chris Bischof, Founder and Principal, Eastside College Preparatory School: "Closing the

Achievement Gap: Challenges, Successes and Lessons Learned"

SALLY TOMLINSON introduced our speaker, briefly saying how he came



to found Eastside. Speaking for himself, Chris (he was too young to be called Mr. then) explained that his interest in East Palo Alto began as a teenager playing basketball. The best league on the Peninsula then played at the East Palo Alto community center, so he commuted there. When moving on to Stanford in 1988, he was struck by the fact that none of his hardworking and disciplined local teammates were even considering college.

The EPA high school dropout rate was 65%. He aimed for a school that would prepare all students for college, and in 2000 started Eastside Prep.

It began rather modestly in the Whiskey Gulch area and has grown to a student body today of 300. Its admissions criteria were twofold: last or almost last in family income, first to aspire to college. That's right, no academic criteria! The school does run a six weeks summer program to assess incoming students' readiness for college prep courses. It operates on an expanded schedule, early on from 8 to 5, now some course until 10 PM. It runs summer sessions too. Foothill offers courses on campus that qualify for college credits, saving huge amounts of money for the families. It now provides on-campus living for 110 students (generally a much improved learning environment), with room for 160. It has many talented long-term teachers. Many volunteers provide tutoring and otherwise complement the faculty. Summer internship programs provide useful experience to students. While nationwide 11% of first generation students graduate college, 80% of Eastside alums are on track to graduate. Eastside provides its alums counseling and information on career-path possibilities, and its grads have attended a range of excellent colleges. They have obtained important professional positions in Silicon Valley and elsewhere. All Eastside students are tuition free. All the school's funding comes from individuals and foundations.



A more than 20 minute Q&A covered how the school got its first students (not easily); whether its model was exportable (Yes, many other schools come to observe, etc); what have been key elements in the school's success (Foothill connection, the expanded school day, year-round education); HENRIETTA BURROUGH's journalism-internships experience, Eastside's "head and shoulders above others"; whether starting the school day later in order to provide students more sleep was under consideration (they have thought about that); what a great basketball coach the Principal is; what is done respecting culture shock of students attending distant and prestigious colleges (assurance "they belong"); whether the school recruits locally and tries to involve families (yes on both fronts); and how it plans funding over the long term (reliance on supporters who "believe in what we are doing").

PRESIDENT BRIAN said this was the most inspirational meeting he had attended, our Club has granted Eastside funds in the past and looks forward to renewed applications. The meeting closed with "Happy Birthday dear BERT!". sixth greatest GDP in the world.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 28, Linda Shore, Executive Director, Astronomical Society of the Pacific: "Astronomy and Science Education"

December 5, Cyrille Betant, Diana Diamond, Dick Mansfield: "Vocational/Long Time Member Talks"

December 7, 6 p.m., Rotary Holiday Party, home of Dick Bush and Patty McGuigan - Plan to come!!