

Parent group rallies to raise \$5K for Sunnyvale schools

By ALIA WILSON

A Committee to Support Sunnyvale Schools—a new parent group formed to ensure small class sizes and help schools avoid staff reductions and cuts to core curriculum areas—raised \$5,000 at its first fundraiser event Jan. 21.

The money will kick-start a three-month campaign rallying around a parcel tax measure the Sunnyvale School District board of education voted to place on a May 3 mail-in ballot election.

The parcel tax would cost property owners in the school district \$59 annually for seven years starting July 1 and would support math, English, science and technology. It would also help boost library programs, protect and maintain physical education programs, minimize increases in class sizes and help hire, train and retain teachers.

If the district does move forward with the parcel tax and gets the required two-thirds vote, the additional money won't solve the problem but will help to buffer it. The parcel tax will generate \$1 million a year for a total of \$7 million before it expires.

The committee was started by three moms: co-chairs Anita Herrmann and Reid Myers, and Kathryn Besser hosted more than 50 people at the Jan. 21 event held at Besser's home.

"Kathy was an amazing hostess and not only did she clear out her furniture



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KATHRYN BESSER

Consultant Connell Lindh, far left, addresses A Committee to Support Sunnyvale Schools at the group's weekly meeting on Feb. 2. The group plans to campaign in support of a parcel tax measure placed on a mail-in ballot election for the Sunnyvale School District.

to symbolize our dwindling resources, but she also dyed her hair red because the Sunnyvale School District is 'in the red,' " Myers said. "Now that's commitment."

The committee will meet weekly and will work on more fundraising as well as plans for direct mailers, phone banking and block walks in Sunnyvale neighborhoods.

Besser has designed a logo and Facebook page and is trying to get more than 500 fans. She has donated her skills as a graphic designer for the cause.

"If the measure is passed by the voters, that will help us with the schools," Besser said. "It will bring in around \$1.3 million, but that's just a third of what we need. Our district has been so incredibly well managed and so fiscally responsible that we have not needed to make cuts like other schools have

had to. But we are eating into our reserves, and they are reserves for a reason. It is saved for rainy day, but it's kind of pouring right now."

To encourage more volunteers to get involved in the campaign, the committee will host a "coffee morning" to be advertised on the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Support-Sunnyvale-Schools/179411375412877.

"The committee is so energized in support of their school district," district superintendent Ben Picard said. "I'm amazed at their incredible commitment to supporting the quality of their neighborhood schools. We all want the same thing ... learning for all, whatever it takes."

For more information about volunteering or getting involved with the campaign, e-mail Reid Myers at reids@mail@gmail.com.

way, which will take up more than 600,000 square feet on land the company owns next to its existing location on N. Mathilda Avenue.

The only permits sought so far are on one of the towers and an assembly building. Construction on the foundation for the first of the two buildings began in January.

"We are planning a phased

expansion of our headquarters location to accommodate our current and predicted growth," said Cindy Ta of Juniper corporate communications. "The first phase of expansion entails construction of two eight-story buildings. We will assess the need for additional buildings and construction as we continue to scale and grow the company."

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Meanwhile, neighboring business Juniper Networks plans on expanding its Sunnyvale campus, possibly doubling its headquarters near Moffett Field. Plans to build a new pair of eight-story buildings are under