

Executive Committee

JANET KOE
President



Janet has two sons at Highlands Elementary, where she is an active volunteer. She became involved with the Foundation at the 2020 Vision meeting in March of 2010, and continued as a member of the Mission Statement and Board Organization teams, and co-Chair of the Board Development Committee.

Janet holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Genetics from Liverpool University U.K. and a PhD in Biophysics from John Moores University, U.K. She pursued post-doctoral studies at Cambridge University, U.K. and U.C. Davis and held an Assistant Professor, Research position at Davis. Janet is an Associate Editor for the Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and has authored over 30 scientific publications/patents. She has participated as both a presenter and panel member at scientific conferences. Over the past 14 years she has pursued her career at various Bay Area Pharmaceutical and Biotech companies.

Affiliation: Highlands Elementary

CHRIS CHAN
Vice President



Chris has been a resident within the San Mateo - Foster City Elementary School District for the last 12 years with his wife, Julie, and two children, Connor and Corrina. Both Connor and Corrina attend Foster City Elementary School. Chris and Julie actively volunteer their time at their children's school, and have expanded their participation in the community to the District level.

Chris has been in the Financial Services field for over 20 years, which included working for neighborhood companies like Visa and Siebel (now part of Oracle) in San Mateo. He has held a variety of management positions to deliver internet and mobile payment options to domestic and global customers. Currently, Chris works for Revolution Money, a subsidiary of American Express.

In his spare time, Chris enjoys running, biking, traveling, and spending time with his children.

Affiliation: Foster City Elementary

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CHRISTINE SEMENZA
Treasurer



Christine Semenza is an active parent volunteer concerned with child education issues. Christine has been a past president of Audubon Elementary PTA and serves as the current president of the San Mateo Foster City PTA Council. She has one child in the school district and is a resident of Foster City. Christine is currently employed at the American Asthma Foundation.

Affiliation: Audubon Elementary

JOANNA BEATY
Secretary



Joanna has been a teacher at Audubon School for nine years, teaching first, second, and third grades. She holds a BA in Child Development in addition to a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Joanna enjoys cooking, gardening, knitting, and reading in her free time. She and her husband reside in San Mateo

Affiliation: Audubon Elementary

JEAN ABELES
Executive Director



Jean Abeles has been the Executive Director of the Foundation since January 2008 after 17 years as a parent and volunteer in the San Mateo-Foster City School District. Jean served as PTA Council President for 2 years prior to joining the Foundation. Before that she held the position of Vice President of Parent Education and Vice President of Legislation. Her volunteer work included a two year term as 17th district PTA Vice President of Health and Community Concerns, Hillsdale High School Drama Boosters President, Meadow Heights PTA President, Site Council Chair, Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Parent Education, PTA Membership Chair, Literacy Chair and Parliamentarian.

Residing in San Mateo with her husband Alan and two of their three children who attended Meadow Heights Elementary School and Abbott Middle School, Jean feels proud and honored to work on behalf of public education and the nearly 11,000 students attending schools in our district. In her spare time she teaches fitness and dance classes, supports the arts, loves to read and watches as many SF Giants and CAL games as possible!

Board of Directors

MIKE NAGLER
Board Development



Mike has been on the Foundation Board for nearly ten years, serving as both Vice-President of the Board and Chairperson of the Annual Campaign. An employee of the school district for over three decades, he's held several elected positions in the classified employee chapter, including President, as well as having been a member of the district's Strategic Planning Committee for a number of years. He teaches creative writing and film history at Canada College.

Affiliation: Audubon Elementary

GORDON STRAUSE
Marketing



Gordon Strause is a product manager at Yahoo!. He joined Yahoo! in early 2005 after a career that has been roughly equally divided between the non-profit and social software worlds. In the non-profit sector, Gordon helped start the service corps City Year, and has also worked or consulted for Citizen Schools, the Hands On Network, the Community Health Corps, and One Economy. In the technology sector, Gordon has worked at the start-ups Firefly, Well Engaged, and eCircles in addition to Yahoo!. Gordon is married to Tina Shih, a neurologist at UCSF, and they have three children at College Park Elementary (and Pre-School): Halle (7), Maddie (5), and Jeremy (3).

Affiliation: College Park Elementary

JOHANNA ANTON*

Fund Development

*Interim member performing the duties of the position while recruitment continues



Johanna is a parent at Highlands Elementary School where she serves on the PTA Board as VP of Programs. She has a professional background as a research and development manager with interdisciplinary scientific expertise and industrial business experience. Her specialty areas include identifying talent and building teams that consistently produce above and beyond expectations.

Johanna has delivered seminars and workshops on effective professional networking, coaching, and mentoring at mid-sized as well as Fortune 100 companies. Johanna has received awards for her volunteer work to help disadvantaged women enter the workforce; for educational outreach in science; for her efforts to lead organizations in challenging business environments; and for promoting work life balance for DuPont employees. She has led workshops, spoken on panels, and delivered presentations at national professional meetings. She has published and presented technical work in peer reviewed journals and in professional texts and has received recognition for her presentation of scientific results to both technical and non-technical audiences.

The quote from Ghandi, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" summarizes Johanna's approach to her work.

Johanna holds a B.S. from Rhodes College and a PhD from the University of Southern Mississippi in Polymer Science and Engineering where she was a Patricia Roberts Harris fellow.

Affiliation: Highlands Elementary

Special Events

BRUCE FURUKAWA

Legal



Bruce N. Furukawa was born in San Francisco and raised in San Mateo, California, where he currently resides with his wife, Lisa and two children, Miya and Jackson. He attended Highlands Elementary School from 1970-74, Buena Vista Elementary School from 1974-75, Borel Middle School from 1976-1979, and graduated from Serra High School in 1983.

Mr. Furukawa obtained his B.A. in political science in 1987 from Columbia University. He received his J.D. in 1991 from Santa Clara Law School. He has been a member of the California Bar since 1991, and is currently a shareholder at Severson & Werson in San Francisco. Mr. Furukawa is a member of the Construction group, primarily representing and counseling architects and engineers. In addition, Mr. Furukawa is the Technology Partner at Severson & Werson, where he has negotiated and implemented e-discovery protocols and developed strategies for cost effectively producing electronic documents in both federal and state courts.

On the weekends, he is the assistant coach for his son's AYSO U-8 team the Red Fireballs, and his interests include golfing, gardening and watching Sharks hockey games.

Affiliation: Highlands Elementary

MIKE ETHERIDGE

Technology



Mike Etheridge works as the VP of Finance for a publicly traded technology company on the Peninsula. Mike is an active Baywood Elementary parent and member of the Site Council since 2009. In addition he served on the successful Measure A Campaign Committee for the school district. Mike is a graduate of Tulane University in New Orleans, LA.

Affiliation: Baywood Elementary

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MICHELLE ROBINSON

Volunteer Coordinator



Michelle Robinson graduated from SDSU with a BA in English and Minor in Psychology and worked in public education for close to 15 years. Michelle is a California Credentialed Teacher, holding a CA CLEAR Multiple Subject and Single Subject Supplemental in English as well as a CLAD. She taught primary grades 3 & 4, 5th and 8th grade Language Arts and Social Studies at the middle school level, and coached State Championship Cross Country teams for Sultana High School in Southern California. In addition to teaching, Michelle participated on curriculum adoption committees, a Superintendent Advisory Board, as well as serving as an Executive Board Member for her teachers' association. She has worked with all participants in public education; students, parents, teachers, administrators...communities!

Michelle lives in San Mateo with her husband and their two daughters. A dedicated volunteer, she serves on the PTA Executive Board for Beresford, has been a Foundation Site Liaison, was the Volunteer Coordinator for the Measure A Campaign and an active member of the Foundation Vision 2020 Committee.

"I'm excited to be a part of the Foundation Board" says Michelle, " I'm looking forward to working with an amazing group of diverse community members to help support our kids. Many thanks!"

Affiliation: Beresford Elementary

BOB ABAYA

Outreach/Education



Bob Abaya joined our district as the principal of San Mateo Park Math and Science Magnet School in Fall 2009 after serving as a principal at Brisbane School for 16 years. Before that he taught Science and Physical Education at Panorama and Lipman Schools in Brisbane. Bob is married with four children, three adults and one 10 year old. His wife teaches Kindergarten and his oldest daughter and oldest son are also teachers. Clearly education is an important value for the Abaya family!

Affiliation: San Mateo Park Elementary

JOHN DEAN

Outreach/Education



John Dean has served as the Principal of Horrall School – Visual & Performing Arts and Technology Integration Magnet since August 2009. Before becoming Horrall's Principal, John was the Coordinator of Categorical Programs for our district for four years. His teaching experience includes a year in our district and a year at Roseland Elementary School. He earned an MS in Curriculum Instruction at Dominican University and a BA in Liberal Arts at Sonoma State University. His areas of expertise include programs and curriculum for English learners, educational technology and categorical budgets.

Affiliation: Horrall Elementary

MARY HOLST

Outreach/Education



Mary Holst has lived in San Mateo since 1985. Both her children attended Highlands, Borel and Aragon. Mary has been a worker bee in the PTA's of all three schools, and has worked on most if not all of the school district bonds and parcel tax elections since my children started in our school district. Most recently she coordinated the staff phone bank volunteers for the successful Measure A Campaign.

Mary has worked for the school district since 1980 and currently works in the IMC where she manages Horizon, our library information system, and provides support to our 20 school libraries and to staff, teachers and volunteers who come in to use the IMC facilities.

Over the last two years she has also picked up supporting our 5th grade elementary instrumental music program. The program is funded by the Foundation and Mary has worked diligently to schedule weekly music lessons, and organize, distribute, maintain and repair instruments loaned out to 5th graders who choose to participate in the program. Last year more than 800 5th graders took 5th grade instrumental music and are continuing their music education in our four excellent middle school music programs this year.

Mary is a staunch believer in public education and in strong school libraries. She continues to prefer to work behind the scenes. In her spare time she practices and teaches yoga, reads, walks, hikes and loves to travel.

Affiliation: CSEA

ATTICUS ROTOLI

Outreach/Education



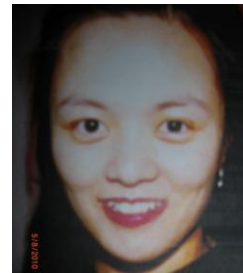
Atticus Rotoli is a Six Sigma Black Belt at Applied Biosystems and earned a black belt in Aikido. Atticus works as Process Excellence Staff at Life Technologies in Foster City. He lives in Foster City with his wife and two children, who attend North Shoreview Montessori.

Atticus and his wife Cari are active parent volunteers in the schools. Atticus is serving his second year as PTA President at North Shoreview Montessori. In addition, he is Vice President of Parent Education for the San Mateo Foster City PTA Council. He became involved with the Foundation during Vision 2020 in March and continued by serving on the Partnership and Strategic Planning Committees.

Affiliation: North Shoreview

T. VAN DO

Cultural Outreach



T. Van Do is a dedicated parent volunteer at College Park Elementary School and College Park Mandarin Preschool. Below is a summary of her extensive volunteer work:

College Park Site Council Member and/or Chair, 2007 – present, PTA Member, 2007 – present, Volunteer Instructor, 2009 – present, Book Fair Chair, Winter-Fall 2010, Art in Action Instructor: K & 3rd grades, 2010

College Park Mandarin Preschool Art & Science Volunteer Instructor, 2009 – present, Yearbook Co-Editor, Winter 2010
Au Co Vietnamese Cultural Center Advisor, 2007 – present, PTA Chair, 2009 – present, Board Member, 2009 – present, Yearbook Editor, 2010

Affiliation: College Park Elementary

Ex-Officio (non-voting)

MOLLY BARTON
District Liaison



Molly Barton is the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for the San Mateo-Foster City School District. She has been with the District for seven years. She began working with the Magnet School Programs and then was the principal at San Mateo Park School before starting in her current position where she has been since 2009. Molly is in her 30th year in education and has worked for the San Carlos Elementary School District, Woodside Elementary School District and the Sequoia Union High School District. She lives in San Carlos where she is an active community member, including serving on the San Carlos Education Foundation Board, San Carlos Children's Theater Board, as PTA Coordinating Council President and on her children's schools' PTA Boards.

SUSAN TOTARO
District Liaison



Susan Totaro is currently the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services. Formerly she was the principal at Horrall Visual and Performing Arts with Technology Integration Magnet School. Susan started with the San Mateo Foster City School District as a volunteer parent in 1982. She then became the PTA president, SITE Council Chairperson, and classroom helper at Laurel School. Mrs. Totaro continued to be active in various organizations over the years in the San Mateo-Foster City School District and the San Mateo Unified High School District. Mrs. Totaro was one of the original board members on the San Mateo County Fine and Performing Arts Board of Directors, and on the Foundation board since 2007.

Mrs. Totaro has been an ELD Tutor, classroom teacher, mentor, BTSA coach, PAR coach, a COMP trainer, and ELD coach as well as a principal and Director of Curriculum and Instruction. She has written a section in the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project book entitled Mentors in the Making. Susan was awarded the Teacher of the Year for San Mateo-Foster City School District and has received numerous awards including PTA Honorary Service and Continuing Service from both the elementary and the high school districts.

LORY LAWSON

School Board Liaison



Lory Lawson has participated as a parent volunteer at several schools as well as at the District level. She has served on committees to select our Superintendent and several principals, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the San Mateo-Foster City Community Education Foundation Board. She has seen, firsthand, the absolute necessity of providing the essential tools and support needed to create a thriving educational community.

Her experiences in the community have focused on lifelong learning. The San Mateo Partnership Advisory Council, the San Mateo Public Library Foundation Board, Nursing Mothers Council Board and the League of Women Voters all share the goals of informing, teaching and connecting people. As the Program Director of Leadership San Mateo, Foster City, Burlingame, Hillsborough, (a Chamber of Commerce sponsored program) she understands that collaboration, inclusion, and vision are the hallmarks of strong communities.

Ms. Lawson currently serves as a San Mateo-Foster City District School Board Trustee.