

**NEWS**

# Kids welcomed back to school

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Last night Berkeley City Council member Darryl Moore of District Two welcomed new kindergarten and first-grade students and their parents to Rosa Parks Elementary School with a free barbecue picnic and a backpack with each student's name on it, stuffed full of goodies donated by local businesses.



**MOORE**

The event, co-sponsored by Moore and the school's P.T.A., drew over 200 attendees and their parents to the school, said Monica Gyulai, mother of a first-grader at the school. Also in attendance were two members of the Alameda County Office of Education, Sheila Jordon, superintendent, and Jacki Fox Ruby, trustee and Berkeley resident.

"This is great," said Jordon. "This school has seen a lot of turmoil. For a city councilman to show up and express his support for the school and the parents sends an important message to the community. In education, nothing is easy. I think Darryl's doing a great job in sending an important message to the community, and bringing the community together."

The backpacks and contents, each printed with the Rosa Parks school logo and name and the student's name written in indelible ink, were donated by the West Berkeley Business Alliance, Bayer



**BACK TO SCHOOL** — New kindergarten and first-grade students were given backpacks and supplies at a welcome-to-school picnic held last night at Rosa Parks Elementary School in West Berkeley. District Two Council member Darryl Moore (back right) helped coordinate the gifts, which were donated by local merchants. Daily News photo by Fred Dodsworth.

Health Care and Cody's Bookstore. Cody's also included two children's books, "Clifford's Opposites" and an English-Spanish coloring book. "There's also color crayons in the

backpack," said Moore.

"This is a wonderful school," said Lisa Shurtz, who covers many bases at Rosa Parks. She is vice-president of

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## SCHOOL

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Latino Outreach for the P.T.A., a brand-new third-grade teacher at the school, and parent to a kindergartner and a third grader, also at the school.

"What makes this school strong are the involved parents and the devoted teachers," said Shurtz. "Every other month the P.T.A. meetings are held in Spanish. That's when the English-only speaking parents get translating headsets."

When the meetings are held in English, the Spanish-speaking parents get translating headsets.

The school's principal, Pat Saddler, is also new to the school. She was impressed by the turnout, and intimidated by the task before her.

"I've got to figure a way to keep all these parents involved throughout the school year," said Saddler. "We have parent liaisons to the Latino and African-American communities and we're hoping to build a bridge to motivate their involvement in the school. That's critically important to the success of the school."

Nubia Combs, 4 years old and beginning kindergarten, was already engaged in her new community.

"I love this school," she said. "It's right next to my house!"

Her parents, Jamie Sims and Khary Combs were also enthusiastic.

"It's nice to get to meet the other parents and the P.T.A.," said her father, Khary. "And to see where the kids play. It's a nice little atmosphere."

Nubia's mother, Jamie, grew up and attended school in the neighborhood.

"Your mama used to go to this school," Sims told her daughter, "but it wasn't like this when it was called Columbus."

Last year Doug Walsh was a new parent at the school's welcoming picnic. This year he, and his now first-grader, decided to be part of the greeting committee.

"We came last year and experienced a great welcome," said Walsh. "We wanted to do the same for the new incoming class this year."