

thanks

**Thank a Teacher Today Parent Toolkit**

san francisco **education** fund

[www.sfedfund.org](http://www.sfedfund.org)

## Thank a Teacher Today Parent Toolkit

**Teachers make a lifetime of difference.** Research shows that in improving a student's academic achievement, the quality of teaching may matter more than any other factor. However, recruiting and retaining quality teachers remains an ongoing challenge facing San Francisco public schools, especially in its lower-performing schools. It will take a community to address this challenge. In 2004, the San Francisco Education Fund (Ed Fund) launched "It Takes a Community," a Public Engagement Initiative to reach out to students, educators, parents, policymakers, and the community at large to work toward solutions to support teachers and promote the quality of teaching and learning in our public schools.

**One solution to attract and keep quality teachers in our schools is to recognize them for the professional work that they do.** All too often, teachers' efforts on behalf of students go unnoticed or at the very least unacknowledged. To begin to change this, the Ed Fund is promoting the *Thank a Teacher Today* campaign (visit [www.thankateachertoday.org](http://www.thankateachertoday.org)). The campaign encourages everyone in San Francisco to take a moment during the month of May (Teacher Appreciation Week is the first full week of May) and throughout the year to personally thank teachers and let them know that we recognize and appreciate their dedication and hard work on behalf of our City's young people.

**Included in this toolkit are a variety of ways in which parents might want to thank their children's teachers.** The Ed Fund talked with San Francisco public school parents and teachers to gather creative ideas to appreciate teachers and to determine what activities really work and are realistic for busy parents to accomplish. The suggestions are organized by the amount of time needed to plan and complete an activity, ranging from less than an hour, to ten hours or more, to year-long activities. These ideas can be easily adapted by others who wish to thank teachers, including school volunteers, students, and community leaders.

**This toolkit includes materials needed to help you get started.** At the back, you will find a *Thank a Teacher Today* poster and postcards. We encourage you to use these as part of the suggested activities or to bring to life your own teacher appreciation ideas. We recommend that you ask your child's principal about what teacher appreciation activities he or she has planned for Teacher Appreciation Week.

No matter what you decide to do, you will be contributing to a larger, citywide movement that shows the teaching professionals in the San Francisco Unified School District that we value their efforts on behalf of our City's young people.

Please join us!

*San Francisco Education Fund*

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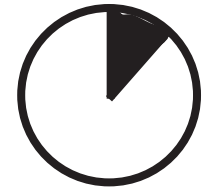
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## Teacher Appreciation Activities You Can Do In 1 Hour or Less

*Teachers tell us that a personal note from a parent or a student means the world to them.*



### 1. Send a Thank-You Note

It may sound simple, but teachers tell us repeatedly that a personal note from a parent or student means the world to them. Throughout the year, and especially during Teacher Appreciation Week, send thank-you notes to your child's teachers. Think of something specific to thank them for, such as:

- The time they spent helping your child.
- Their clear interest in your child's success.
- A particular assignment they developed.
- Keeping you informed about your child's progress.

Use the postcards included with this toolkit to send a handwritten note. Visit the San Francisco Unified School District website at [www.sfusd.edu](http://www.sfusd.edu) and click on "school information" to look up the street address of your child's school.

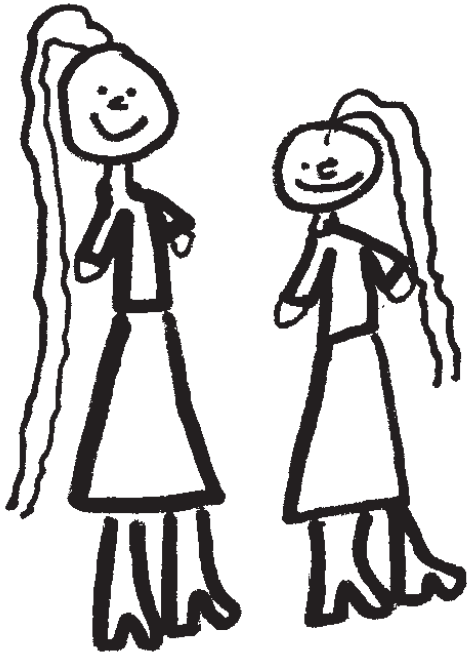
If you have your teacher's email address, you can send a free e-card through one of the following websites (once you're on the website, enter the word "teacher" in the search box to find free e-cards for Teacher Appreciation Week).

[www.yahoo.americangreetings.com](http://www.yahoo.americangreetings.com)

[www.bluemountain.com](http://www.bluemountain.com)

#### Extra Credit:

Get your child involved! Young children can help decorate a handwritten thank-you note. Encourage older children to send their own thank-you notes to their teachers.



## 2. Hang a *Thank a Teacher Today* Poster and Ask Others to Do So

Hang the *Thank a Teacher Today* poster (included with this kit) in the window of your home or another convenient location where teachers and others in your community can see it. You can also ask a local business to hang the *Thank a Teacher Today* poster so that everyone can see that the community supports its teachers. Here's how:

- Visit a local business and ask to speak to the manager. Avoid “rush” times when staff will be too busy to talk with you.
- Tell the manager that you live in the neighborhood and are trying to get the community involved in Teacher Appreciation Week. Explain that a quick and easy way to get involved is to hang the *Thank a Teacher Today* poster in the window of their business.
- Provide the business with the poster included in this toolkit.
- Thank the business for agreeing to help!

Just think what a strong message we would send to teachers and the community if the *Thank a Teacher Today* poster were displayed in windows throughout your neighborhood and the City! If everyone who receives this toolkit asks just one business to hang up the poster, we can make this vision a reality.

### Extra Credit:

If you have more time, contact the Ed Fund at [getinvolved@sfeedfund.org](mailto:getinvolved@sfeedfund.org) to order more *Thank a Teacher Today* posters, and ask multiple businesses in your neighborhood to hang the poster. You can also ask libraries, community centers, churches and other places of worship, police stations, and firehouses to hang the poster.

*You can look  
at proposals  
online and  
select a project  
you want to  
help fund.*

### **3. Bring a Teacher's Idea to Life**

Sometimes teachers have a great idea for a student project but are not able to implement it because they don't have the supplies or financial support they need. The nonprofit website [www.DonorsChoose.org](http://www.DonorsChoose.org) helps teachers fund their projects. Here's how it works:

Teachers submit project proposals to DonorsChoose for materials or experiences their students need to learn. Proposals range from "Magical Math Centers" (\$200) to "Big Book Bonanza" (\$320) to "Cooking Across the Curriculum" (\$1,100). Community members like you can look through the proposals online and select a project that you want to help fund. You can give as little as \$10 to help fund a student project, and your contribution is 100% tax-deductible.

Even if you aren't able to contribute money, you can encourage your child's teacher to submit a project proposal to [www.DonorsChoose.org](http://www.DonorsChoose.org). Then spread the word to friends, family, and colleagues that the teacher has a project in need of funding! You can do this easily by clicking on the "Tell A Friend" link on the right-hand side of the proposal, which will allow you to send an email with a link to the proposal to encourage others to donate.

#### **Extra Credit:**

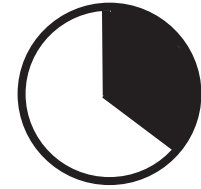
Help a San Francisco teacher improve his or her practice! Donate to the Ed Fund, which provides leadership and professional development opportunities for teachers throughout the year. Visit [www.sfedfund.org](http://www.sfedfund.org) to learn more.

My Best teacher



## Teacher Appreciation Activities You Can Do In 4 Hours or Less

*You can visit [www.sfedfund.org](http://www.sfedfund.org) to share your story about a teacher who made an impact on your or your child's life.*



### 1. Share Your Story

We've all had at least one teacher we remember because he or she inspired us, made learning fun, or expressed a genuine interest in our lives. Take a moment to think about your own or your child's favorite teachers. What makes them great? How have they had an impact on your or your child's life?

You might want to consider:

- A particular experience you had with that teacher.
- Something the teacher said or did that was meaningful to you.
- His or her teaching style.
- A simple description of the characteristics that make this teacher your favorite.

Your story can be as short as a couple sentences or as long as a few pages. You can write separate stories about as many teachers as you would like. The Ed Fund is collecting stories about favorite teachers. Visit [www.sfedfund.org](http://www.sfedfund.org) to share your story, and then send a copy to the teacher you wrote about as a gesture of thanks.

#### Extra Credit:

You can also send a version of your story as a letter to the editor of your local paper or your school's newsletter. Start your letter by stating that you are writing in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week. Tips for writing an effective letter:

- Keep it short – 100 to 200 words maximum.
- Include your full name, address, and phone number – required for verification purposes.
- Follow up to ensure the letter was received.
- See sample letter on next page.

# thanks

## Send letters to:

*San Francisco Chronicle*  
*Letters to the Editor*  
*901 Mission Street*  
*San Francisco, CA 94103*  
*letters@sfchronicle.com*  
*Fax: 415.543.7708*

*San Francisco Examiner*  
*Letters to the Editor*  
*450 Mission Street*  
*San Francisco, CA 94105*  
*editor@examiner.com*

### *Sample Letter*

*Editor:*

*In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, I am writing to encourage everyone to take a moment and thank their teachers. I want to thank Ms. Bell from XYZ High School. She always took time to give me lots of feedback on my essays and helped me learn to love reading and writing. I am passing this on to my own children who love to read and visit the library. Teachers really do make a lifetime of difference.*

*Thank you, Ms. Bell, for all that you have done for me!*

*Sue Johnson*  
*San Francisco*

The addresses of two large papers in San Francisco appear to your left. Remember, you can also send this letter to the editor of your school's newsletter.

*Many teachers  
are on their feet  
for hours at a  
time without  
a break.*

## **2. Arrange for Teachers to Receive Free, On-Site Massages**

Many teachers are on their feet for hours at a time without a break. Most are juggling many responsibilities like preparing for their next class, helping students with their assignments, or attending meetings with their colleagues. A great way to show teachers that we want to help is to arrange for free, on-site massages during Teacher Appreciation Week.

The first steps you need to take for this teacher appreciation activity are to find and hire a massage practitioner. Here's how:

- Search online under “chair massage” in San Francisco to find a variety of businesses that provide this service. You can solicit donations from other parents and community members to hire a professional massage practitioner to provide chair massages.
- You can also recruit a massage practitioner-in-training from a local massage school to provide free massages as part of the “clinical hours” (time spent giving massages) they need for certification. Search online or in the Yellow Pages for “schools of massage” in San Francisco and contact one or more to ask if they can help you identify students at their school who would be willing to provide free massages to teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week as part of their clinical hours for certification.

# thank you



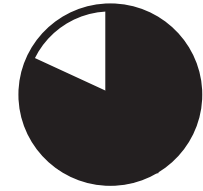
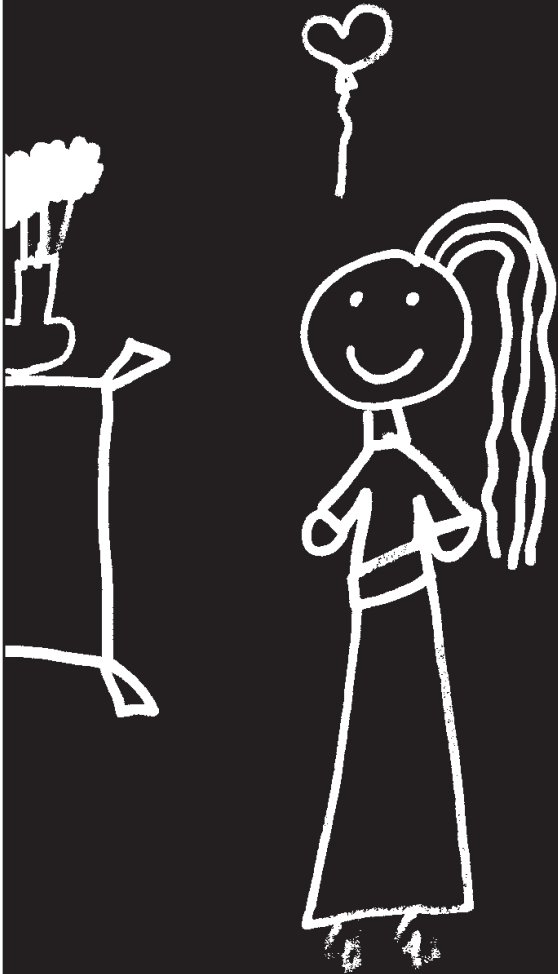
Once you have identified a massage practitioner, here are some tips for making this teacher appreciation activity work at your school:

- Talk with the massage practitioner(s) and explain that you want to offer 20-minute massages to teachers throughout Teacher Appreciation Week (the first full week of May). Work out a schedule with the practitioner(s) that allows for maximum coverage during that week.
- Contact the school principal to identify a location for the massages to take place (e.g. the teachers' lounge).
- Create a sign-up sheet with 20-minute slots throughout Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Ask the principal to let teachers know that this service will be available and how they can sign up.
- Let the massage practitioner(s) know in advance the dates and times that teachers have selected to receive their free massages.
- Confirm with the practitioner(s) and make sure they know the address of the school and where to set up when they arrive. Also give the practitioner(s) a contact name and phone number in case they run into problems.
- Call the school principal and the practitioner(s) the day before to make sure everything is all set.

### **Extra Credit:**

You can also collect donations from parents and community members to pay for gift certificates for manicures, pedicures, facials, and other relaxation services for teachers.

## Teacher Appreciation Activities You Can Do In 10 Hours or Less



### 1. Provide a Special Meal for Teachers

Everybody knows that when you love someone, you feed them! Providing a special meal is a great way to honor teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. To make it easier for teachers to participate in the meal, arrange to provide it at their school during the school day. Here's how:

- Get together with other parents to organize a potluck breakfast or lunch for teachers.
- Remember to make sure that someone is responsible for bringing a main dish, side dishes, beverages, dessert, and supplies (plates, napkins, utensils, etc.). Alternatively, you can collect donations from other parents and use them to pay for a catered meal to be brought in for teachers.
- Contact your school's principal to identify an appropriate time, date, and location at the school for the meal.
- Ask the principal to help publicize the meal to teachers so they can plan to attend.
- Confirm with all participating parents that they will be there and remind them what they agreed to bring.

#### Extra Credit:

Make the meal even more meaningful. Here are some ideas:

- Ask students to create thank-you posters and hang them up in the room where you will be providing the special meal.
- Ask local florists to donate flowers, and have a student or a group of students give one to each teacher.
- Prepare a short speech about why your community values the school's teachers.

*Visit the teachers' lounge and consider the following:*

- *Newer furniture: tables, chairs*
- *Wall hangings or new artwork*
- *Plants*
- *Office supplies*
- *New coffee pot or microwave*
- *Bulletin boards*
- *A candy jar*
- *Boxes of tea and coffee*

## **2. Redecorate the Teachers' Lounge**

The teachers' lounge is a place for teachers to eat lunch, meet with colleagues, or simply take a break. With so much activity, teachers' lounges are bound to suffer from wear and tear. You might find mismatched furniture, old posters with torn corners, or appliances in need of replacement. Sprucing up the teachers' lounge is a real and lasting way for parents to show their appreciation. Here's how:

- Recruit at least four other people (parents or older students) to help – the more the merrier, but make sure that all the responsibility does not fall on just one person.
- Talk to the school's principal about your idea and visit the teachers' lounge to see what type of redecorating needs to be done (see box at left for ideas).
- Decide with your group what you want to do, and be sure to ask teachers if they agree with your proposed changes. Teachers might have additional ideas you didn't think of and could incorporate.
- Assign responsibilities to each group member. You can pool money to make purchases or solicit local businesses for free or discounted items.
- Coordinate a time with the principal for when your group can go in and spruce up the teachers' lounge.
- Confirm the time with your group and redecorate!
- Hang a banner that says "Thank You, Teachers!" in the newly redecorated teachers' lounge and ask the principal to announce the change during Teacher Appreciation Week.

### **Extra Credit:**

- Bring in food and beverages for teachers to enjoy as part of an "opening ceremony" of the newly redecorated teachers' lounge.
- Let your local newspaper know that the parents at your school value the teachers so much that you got together and redecorated the teachers' lounge to show your appreciation.

## Teacher Appreciation Activities You Can Do Throughout the Year

*Teacher support and appreciation should be a year-round activity.*

**Teacher support and appreciation should be a year-round activity.** There are many ways in which you can stay involved with your child's school and work to ensure that teachers feel supported. Here are a few good ways to get involved:

**Join a local parent organization.** There are several different parent organizations to choose from in San Francisco. Here are just a few:

- **Your child's school PTA or the San Francisco PTA**, a division of the California State PTA, which is a branch of the national PTA, the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation. Visit [www.sfpta.org](http://www.sfpta.org) or call 415.241.6048 to learn more.
- **Parents for Public Schools-San Francisco** is a network of parents working together to build and ensure quality public education for all children in San Francisco. Visit [www.ppsf.org](http://www.ppsf.org) or call 415.468.7077 to learn more.
- **Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth** is a local child advocacy organization working to improve the well-being of San Francisco's children, youth, and their families. Visit [www.colemanadvocates.org](http://www.colemanadvocates.org) or call 415.239.0161 to learn more.
- **Chinese for Affirmative Action** works with a broad range of community members to inform and educate the San Francisco Unified School District about the educational needs of Chinese students. Visit [www.caasf.org](http://www.caasf.org) or call 415.274.6750 to learn more.

**Become a school volunteer.** San Francisco School Volunteers is dedicated to serving San Francisco's public school children by recruiting, training, and placing dedicated people as volunteers in the classroom. Visit [www.sfsv.org](http://www.sfsv.org) or call 415.749.3700 to learn more.

**Join your School Site Council.** The School Site Council is the major part of the overall decision-making structure at each school. Participants are elected by their peers to represent the members of a school community. Ask your school's principal for more information about joining the School Site Council.

**Form a classroom committee.** Join with other parents to form a classroom committee that can get the word out when your child's teacher needs something for the classroom, such as supplies and materials for student projects or parent chaperones for field trips.

**For information about other parent involvement opportunities,** contact the San Francisco Unified School District Office of Parent Relations at [pr@poet.sfusd.edu](mailto:pr@poet.sfusd.edu) or 415.241.6185.

you are a nice teacher



### Let us know!

Please let us know about these and other teacher appreciation activities that you have implemented in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week.

You can contact us at:

San Francisco Education Fund  
727 Golden Gate Avenue, 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
415.749.3700  
or [info@sfedfund.org](mailto:info@sfedfund.org)

For even more teacher appreciation activities, visit the national PTA website at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) and search under “teacher appreciation.”

thanks for reading  
to us



san francisco **education** fund  
Collaborate. Innovate. Advocate.

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