

**River Oaks Elementary School**  
**Alumni Newsletter**  
**October 2004**

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wrap-up**

In the past, River Oaks Elementary alumni seldom heard from their old school. We hope this will change. Inspired by ROE's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in April 2004, an alumni association is in the planning stages and an alumni website is available at URL [www.geocities.com/riveroaksalumni/](http://www.geocities.com/riveroaksalumni/). In this newsletter, we'd like to share some news about the anniversary, the alumni reunion and the school.

River Oaks had a wonderful 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in the 2003/2004 school year. Students and families immersed themselves in school history. Alumni and friends of the school enjoyed a heartwarming reunion in April 2004, kicked off by a luncheon featuring Jeff Bezos as the keynote speaker. Jeff is the founder and CEO of online retailer Amazon.com and a 1976 graduate of ROE. The 300 luncheon guests – mainly alumni – enjoyed his engaging, funny speech about customer service.

Alumni Dr. Jon H. Fleming and Harvin Moore, a trustee of the Houston Independent School District, also made remarks at the luncheon. Dr. Elizabeth Dennis Rockwell, who was in the first group of children to attend ROE, was recognized as the honorary chair of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festivities.

On Saturday, April 3, about 400 alumni and many teachers returned to ROE for an alumni reception. Outside, hundreds of people enjoyed the annual PTO fundraising carnival.

We'd like to thank some of the people who made the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration possible. Among our community friends, Zack Parrish of Compass Bank Private Client Services, the Marsh family of EV1.Net Companies, BMC Software, and our hosts at Hotel Derek provided underwriting for the Jeff Bezos luncheon.

We also received generous underwriting from alumni: The Noel family - Jim, Carol, Ed, Will and Robert – and Ned Holmes. We are truly grateful for their assistance. All the proceeds of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary luncheon are now invested in our Library Fund.

In addition, River Oaks alumni Mrs. Joanne King Davis, Elizabeth Rockwell, Jon Fleming and Harvin Moore were wonderful sources of information, inspiration and support during the planning stages.

**Legacy for the Future**

To commemorate this milestone anniversary, and to prepare ROE to educate outstanding students for the next 75 years, we launched a campaign to raise \$3 million to build and endow a fantastic new stand-alone library for River Oaks Elementary.

The vision is to create a facility that enhances the traditional library setting with state-of-the-art technology resources. The endowment will support the purchase of books, materials, subscriptions, hardware and software updates. It will also ensure the students always have the most current technology and online resources available. Our new library will be a place where children can learn to read and enjoy books, as well as conduct online research.

We are pleased to announce that a distinguished Houston alum has pledged \$1 million as a lead gift to help make this dream come true. In addition, the PTO, parents, alumni and friends contributed a combined \$250,000 towards this new facility. In fact, most of the PTO fundraising during the 2003/2004 school year was dedicated to the Library Fund.

In the near future, you will receive information on how you can contribute to this legacy. Our goal is to raise the remaining \$1.75 million needed for the Library Fund.

### **Progressive Education Continues at ROE**

In addition to celebrating the anniversary, ROE made significant progress in our efforts to become certified as an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP) school. Upon certification, ROE will be among a handful of elementary schools in the U.S. to hold this distinction. The challenging IBPYP provides an opportunity for ROE students to construct meaning, principally through concept-driven inquiry. The PTO has committed approximately \$188,000 over three years to bring this progressive program to ROE.

Meanwhile, ROE will continue to offer enriched academics for our students, 80% of whom are gifted and talented children admitted to the school based on test scores. These children come from many neighborhoods throughout HISD. About 20% of the student body is zoned to the school.

### **School Renovation Starts Soon**

In the 2004/2005 school year, ROE will be the site of a major construction project, funded by a public bond. A new classroom wing will be built to replace "temporary" buildings that have served as classrooms for more than 10 years. The aging infrastructure will be brought up to standards, while the historic façade of the main building will be preserved. We're excited about having a modern structure that accommodates ROE's growing enrollment.

We hope you've enjoyed reconnecting with your elementary school. We look forward to sharing more news about River Oaks Elementary in the future. If there's anything you'd like to know about the school today, or to share with fellow alumni, let us know. To send news, or addresses of alumni who'd like to receive future news from River Oaks Elementary School, please send their addresses to:

River Oaks Elementary School

PTO Alumni Relations  
2008 Kirby Drive  
Houston, Texas 77019

*For updates on River Oaks Elementary School, check the PTO website at [www.riveroakspto.org](http://www.riveroakspto.org) and the school website at [www.riveroakselementary.org](http://www.riveroakselementary.org).*