

# Flood students to get tours of East P.A.'s natural beauty

By Stephanie Kirtland  
Times staff

For Jane Hall of Environmental Volunteers, East Palo Alto isn't the bad place it's cracked up to be. And Hall — along with her troop of "Evers" — wants to share that vision with the students of the newly opened Flood School.

With their "bags of tricks and goodies" — and \$1,950 in support from the Bayshore Rotary and Peninsula Community Foundation — the non-profit EVer's have a plan designed to heighten the students' awareness of the environ-

ment around them, an environment which is richer than most credit it to be.

"East Palo Alto doesn't have a good reputation," says Hall, who is president of the non-profit natural science education group. "(Their reputation) is that there's not much there. We want to show them there is something."

And that something is as near as their school yard, says Hall.

To explore the urban environment, the Evers use backyard dirt — or flowers that blossom in the cracks of the school playground. In studying earthquakes, the volunteers focus on home and classroom

safety. Understanding earthquakes includes realizing the potential hazards and what the students can do to change them, said Barbara Popolow of EV.

"Knowledge allows a sense of greater control" over your environment, she said.

The Environmental Volunteers, active in both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties since 1972, has more than 100 volunteers. The volunteers provide in-class presentations and field trips for more than 9,000 elementary schoolchildren and 2,000 adults a year.

"The teachers are already excited about the EVs' presentations,"

said Dr. Charlie M. Knight, superintendent of the Ravenswood district. "It's a wonderful chance for East Palo Alto kids to learn more about the environment and the area's history. We're looking forward to sharing our resources."

For the program at Flood, the Evers will present a variety of presentations to the students.

First and fourth graders will focus on urban ecology and the important role they play in protecting it. Second and fifth graders will study the ecology of the Baylands, visiting Coolie Landing in East Palo Alto. And third and sixth graders

will learn about earthquake geology and preparedness, with a trip to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to see the local earthquake landscape.

"We want to open kids up to the environment and natural science," said Popolow. "The sessions make them aware of how humans affect their environment and what coexists with them in the world. We want to give them the tools to use when older."

The tools, she continues, are those necessary to solve problems: heightened awareness, inspection and analysis.