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Melissa Baten Caswell Kicks Off Campaign, Names Honorary Co-Chairs, Plans for School-Based Candidate Forums

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Palo Alto, California As local election campaigns swing into action, Palo Alto candidate for School Board Melissa Baten Caswell (www.melissabatencaswell.org) kicked off her campaign in early September with a slate of five honorary co-chairs at the helm, including local county supervisor Liz Kniss and two former Palo Alto mayors, Gary Fazzino and Lanie Wheeler. Community leader Walt Hays and former School Board President Julie Jerome rounded out Baten Caswell's team of honorary co-chairs.

Held at the Midtown home of supporters Julie and John Sternfield, Baten Caswell's kickoff party boasted more than 125 attending supporters, including Supervisor Kniss, current Palo Alto City Council members Peter Drekmeier, Bern Beecham, Judy Kleinberg, Jack Morton and mayor Yoriko Kishimoto; current school board members Mandy Lowell, Gail Price, Barb Mitchell and Camille Townsend; city council candidates Dan Dykwel, Sid Espinosa, and Pat Burt, and a wide array of community leaders and friends.

"I'm a big supporter of Melissa's campaign," said supervisor Kniss. "She will bring such wonderful leadership characteristics to the School Board. With her experience and business knowledge, Melissa will make an outstanding Board member from day one!"

Baten Caswell's campaign emphasizes three important priorities for Palo Alto schools: A clear and measurable strategic vision, a collaborative and supportive culture, and providing a great education to all children. "We can not rest on our laurels," observed

Baten Caswell during her remarks, “It is really important that all of our students graduate with the academic and social skills that they will need to be successful in this changing world. And I want all of our children to excited and curious about learning for the rest of their lives. ”

Most recently, Baten Caswell served for two years as President of the Palo Alto Council of PTAs. She has also been President of the Duveneck PTA, a founding Board Member of Youth Community Service, a member of the campaign cabinet for the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, a member of two Mayoral Task Forces, an Ambassador for the Family Resources Program and the creator and leader of the award-winning Hurricane Katrina relief program.

“Melissa has been great to work with,” observed Pat Markevitch, Parks and Recreation Commissioner. “As PTAC President she was organized, decisive, innovative and smart. She brought people together, which is not always easy in Palo Alto. She will be a wonderful addition to the School Board.”

Later this month, Baten Caswell, along with the other candidates for the three open seats on the School Board, will begin making the rounds of twelve district schools at a series of educational forums sponsored by the PTAs. Member of the public who would like to learn more about the candidates should plan to attend one of these forums. Baten Caswell’s website, at www.melissabatencaswell.org/pages/events provides the schedule for these valuable events.

According to Palo Alto Mayor Yoriko Kishimoto, “Melissa Baten Caswell is an ideal candidate for the School Board. Her character and experience will make her an extremely effective leader for our schools.”

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