



Measuring What Matters

By Richard W. Ackerly, Head of School

We ask all prospective kindergarten parents to tell us what success looks like. "Let's say Johnny is accepted and nine years from now you are thrilled with the education he has received at Children's Day School. For what are you patting us on the back?" Parents answer in remarkably consistent ways. They all say something about love of learning—something like: "My child still loves school," "My child still loves to learn and has learned more about how to do it."

Parents also focus on integrity and knowing one's self: "My child has learned more about who she is." "My child has discovered and developed his gifts." "My child knows more about his strengths and weaknesses and is comfortable in his own skin." The third item which almost all parents bring up is something like: "My child has learned how to get along with others."

Those parents who say something about academics clearly want more than just "the basics:" "She has the tools to tackle any project she is given." "...can find answers to questions..." "...has an understanding of concepts he can build on for the rest of his life." "Her love of math has flourished." "I would be proud to see his academic accomplishments, but I would also see a son with a strong sense of moral stewardship for himself and others and the world."

At CDS, of course, we strive to maximize academic achievement. It is interesting, however, that parents know that maximizing academic achievement requires optimal growth of the whole child. They seem to know what educational research and all

good teachers know; i.e. that the best way to maximize academic achievement is to focus on love of learning, self-confidence based on self-knowledge, building a cooperative learning community in the classroom and acquiring the disciplines of learning.

Moreover, most schools' mission statements reflect the broad understanding that education is more than academics. A working draft of the Children's Day School mission statement reflects this concept: "...to graduate children of diverse backgrounds who are academically skilled, fearless learners, good at working collaboratively, caring, generous and dedicated to making a meaningful difference in the world."

In the current climate of our city and our nation, our schools are at risk for getting as far as "academically skilled" and stopping. Teachers often feel pressured to take their focus off the things they care about—the things that brought them into education in the first place—and just work on getting their students into high school or college. Students tend to compromise their love of learning and their biological drive toward integrity as they get older and perceive that what really counts is a narrow definition of achievement.

At CDS—from board meetings to the classroom—we are working hard to keep our focus on our mission. In the strategic planning process the Programmatic Excellence Task Force decided that it is of the utmost strategic importance that we devise metrics for what really matters. *(continued on page 2)*



This decision is indeed strategic if we want to deliver for the parents of those kindergarten applicants. Many schools with the same commitments fall away from their espoused values because of fear of the final exam; the high school or college admission process. In some cases this fear filters down through the grades all the way to kindergarten.

We know that CDS students will pass their “final exams” if we succeed at our goals of bringing out the genius of each student and graduating a diverse group of disciplined, courageous learners. In order for this success to continue as we mature as a school, it is of strategic importance that we create a breakthrough in accountability. Simply put: we have to identify what really matters and measure students and ourselves accordingly.

What is our business? To maximize the growth of each individual student: Student A needs to focus on taking risks in class; Student B needs to try to be less argumentative, asking more questions and letting her classmates win arguments; Student C needs to stop trying to stay out of trouble and just be himself, so that he can better focus on his genius as a writer. If this is our business, we must measure the acquisition of specific learning disciplines that will best serve our students into high school and beyond, as well as track progress toward being a disciplined lover of learning.

We are in the process of putting in place a grading system which communicates to the students what really matters. This system will provide teachers, parents and trustees with data that maps right onto our mission statement. At parent/teacher/student conferences, students will set goals and design paths to those goals, and teachers and parents will help them maintain their focus on those goals. Our new progress reports (already being “field tested” in the middle school) will put academic achievement in the context of the larger disciplines of a learner—matters over which students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have control:

- Shows active curiosity
- Takes responsibility for learning

- Builds on prior learning
- Responds to feedback
- Manages time effectively

Not all eighth graders will master Algebra I; only about half of 14-year olds are cognitively ready to master algebra. Nonetheless, at CDS we teach it to all seventh and eighth graders because, taught properly, algebra challenges all of our students appropriately. A CDS student’s report card will show not only her degree of mastery, but also how she engaged with the material, how she worked with others in cooperative learning groups and how she persevered.

The high schools to which CDS students will be applying respond to this approach with enthusiasm. Most admission directors are frustrated by grade inflation, not knowing what an “A” really means. Most high schools don’t want geniuses; they want students who are in touch with their own unique genius. The CDS report card will make it clear just what that “A” means.

Parents usually dream big for their children. They want it all. We don’t say, “You’re dreaming.” We say, “Right. We can deliver on this if we work together and put your child at the center.” We succeed when our students become self-disciplined, enthusiastic learners with the confidence to make a difference to others and a commitment to social responsibility. We believe this can be true for all students as we fulfill another part of our contract, which is to help each child flesh out his or her own unique character.

Our vision is that we will be able to track not only test scores and lists of high school placement, but also numbers that measure our students as disciplined lovers of learning who are growing in important ways. Our vision is that freed from fear of academic failure, children will never lose their natural love of learning. By focusing attention on growth, the disciplines of character and the disciplines of a learner, we increase the likelihood that we will graduate the diverse group of courageous and caring collaborators our mission statement describes.



The CDS buddy program (featured here and on the front and back covers) is an opportunity for older and younger students to meet throughout the year. The program offers many opportunities for meaningful work: middle schoolers read with preschoolers and then accompany buddies to Friday assembly, fourth and fifth graders peer edit sixth grade essays, and third graders and kindergartners do joint data analysis after weighing cans collected for a food drive.



Children's Day School—Defining Success

By Tracy Kirkham, Chair, Board of Trustees

We all know that in the last few years Children's Day School has become a remarkable success. What is the best measure of that success? Is it the increasing enrollment in our upper grades? Is it the fact that we have enough applicants each year to fill our preschool and kindergarten many times over? Is it the impressive capital improvements we made to our campus last year—the preschool complex, the library and the David Minus Science Center? Is it that our elementary and middle school students routinely excel on the standardized tests administered at independent schools? Is it the depth of talent and experience in our faculty and in the pool of teachers applying to join them? Is it that our community leads the Bay Area in its financial commitment to socio-economic diversity?

During the 2003–04 school year, Children's Day School was one of three schools nationwide selected by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) to participate in the design of a new metric for measuring success in education. As part of that process, we met with a consultant supplied by NAIS and focused on those aspects of our program that are at the core of our identity and central to our mission. We reflected on everything from the benefits derived from the sheep and chickens in the farm to the manner in which economic diversity and community involvement define the classroom environment at Children's Day School. It was an extremely valuable process.

Through that process and many discussions with Rick Ackerly, I have identified what I believe is the essential measure of a school's success. I have also come to realize that what I've always known intuitively as a parent is in fact professionally valid—the bottom line test for a successful school is whether it is a happy place. In other words, where you see happy teachers interacting with happy children, you can rest assured that learning, indeed highly accelerated learning, is taking place. Happy children learn better and faster and more. Happy teachers are more effective. We all know it, so it should not be a radical idea to create an elementary and middle school grounded on that premise.

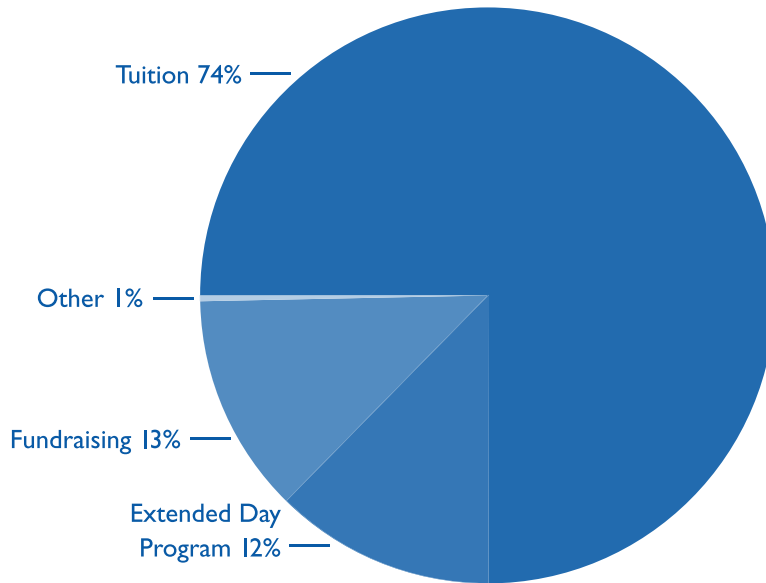
While the idea of creating a happy school is simple, actually doing it requires expertise and dedication. It requires the creation of an organization in which all people—children, teachers, administrators, parents and other family members—are respected for their unique genius and talent, and treated with respect whether they succeed or fail at any particular task. A truly happy school can only exist in a community in which each person takes responsibility for their own actions and relationships, and assumes that others will behave responsibly as well. It requires an environment in which there are clearly-articulated standards to which everyone is held equally accountable. All children thrive in honesty. They are happy when challenged to grow and improve. They respond when they are expected to employ ethical behavior in pursuit of their goals and in resolving their conflicts. They become CDS students.

In this environment, students embrace the academic material and social skills presented at each grade level because they are personally relevant. They are the tools necessary for understanding the universe and mastering the basic tasks of life—two endeavors that children are hardwired to enjoy. As anyone who has ever raised a young child can attest, becoming an increasingly competent person is really fun. Learning is fun. Children's Day School is fun. And that is both the secret and the measure of our success.

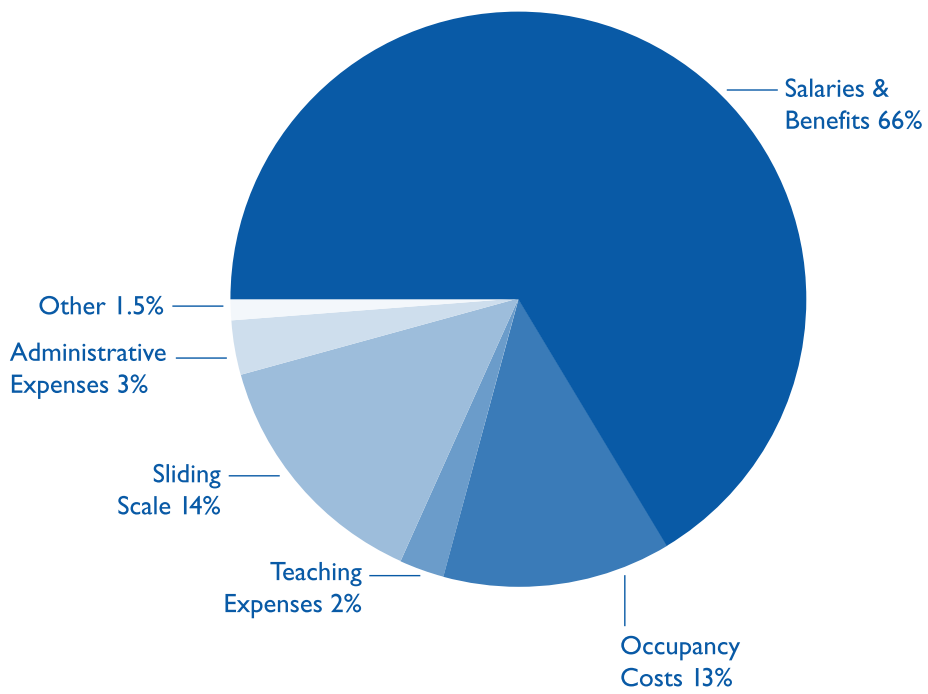
I would like to thank everyone in the Children's Day School community for making the 2003–04 school year one of such excitement and growth. I especially want to acknowledge the classroom liaisons and everyone who worked actively with the PTTA and its various event committees, who served on the Library, Development or Site Committees, or who assisted the Admission Department with tours and new family activities. It's been a lot of fun building a school with you.

Report from the Board Treasurer

Income



Expenses



Message from the PTTA President



Donuts, Dialogue and Dedication: A Year in Review

By Marion Quinones, PTTA President 2003-04

For me, the 2003–04 school year was the year I got in touch with my long-dormant inner volunteer and discovered why getting involved at CDS is both enjoyable and rewarding. I hadn't volunteered before, not really, not in a way that filled several files with paper, took more time than I let on to my patient spouse and most importantly not in a way that really mattered to me. I soon learned that the essence of volunteering is being involved with things I care about (my kids and their school, which rapidly became my school as well) with people I care about and with whom I enjoy eating donuts on Friday mornings in the sunny CDS yard.

I became president of the CDS PTTA because of the great group of people who had served as PTTA officers in prior years and who had already agreed to do the job with me. I enjoyed my role for the same reasons – I had terrific support from fellow officers, parents, Mr. Rick, the Board of Trustees, teachers and administrators and benefited from the collective experience, good company and energy of this community.

I didn't begin to know what the PTTA's mission of "building community" meant until I sat down with my fellow officers—Darcy Provo, Amanda Richard, Andrea Fuller, Adam Feuerstein and Kate Moses. We agreed that the PTTA theme for the year would be "Communicating Academic Excellence." This theme became a focus for Parent Education Night and several PTTA meetings, including one featuring a presentation from CDS Art Specialists on art and brain development. By engaging parents in a

dialogue about what kids learn at CDS and how they learn it, the PTTA worked to spread the word about the rich academic experiences CDS students enjoy. We hoped to demystify the connection between the supportive and collaborative environment at CDS and students who are strong writers, skilled mathematicians and accomplished artists.

Of course, the PTTA also hosted, coordinated, planned and attended traditional CDS events with enthusiasm and style, and I am extremely grateful to the parent leaders who brought the community together to celebrate milestones and accomplishments. The Welcome Picnic, Faculty Holiday Party, Auction, Country Fair, monthly teacher appreciation breakfasts and Friday coffees would not be possible without the hard work, good humor and event planning skills of many. Our school and students benefit from the time and talent of parents who take on a wide variety of volunteer roles—from classroom liaison to CDS librarian to field trip driver to Friday coffee host.

Let me extend thanks from all of the PTTA officers to the CDS community for your enthusiasm for our school and its educational vision. It is a great pleasure to be part of such a supportive, dedicated and entertaining group, and I know that the PTTA will thrive under the capable leadership of Marianne Evans and future presidents. I look forward to continuing my involvement in the Children's Day School Parent-Teacher-Trustee-Administrator Association wearing my "A" hat as well as my "P" hat for many years to come.

PTTA Officers

Adam Feuerstein
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Darcy Provo
Marion Quinones
Amanda Richard
Carolyn Allison-Holland

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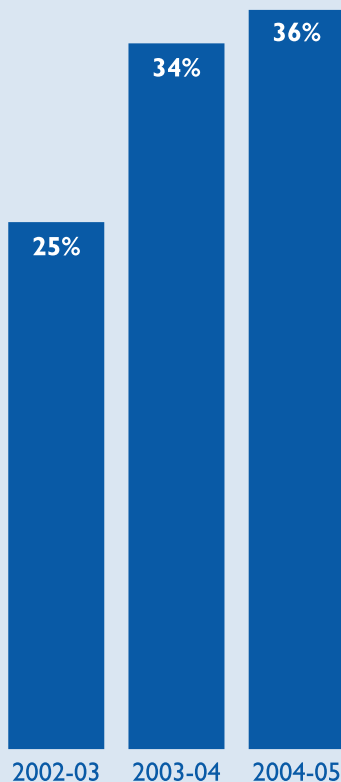
Kathryn Selleck
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Annual Fund Donors

The Children's Day School community is deeply grateful to all those who contributed to the 2003-04 Annual Fund.

The campaign raised \$318,453 for sliding scale tuition, faculty professional development and to help sustain and grow the programs that make CDS extraordinary. The Development Office has made every effort to be accurate in compiling gifts received between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004. If you note any error, we apologize and request you notify the Development Office.

Percent of Students on Sliding Scale Tuition



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Kavya Chatterjee (14) enjoys the weekly assembly with her grandparents on Grandparents and Special Friends Day.

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Emma Larkowich (11) and grandparents work on a project during Grandparents and Special Friends Day.

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Gifts of cash, payable by check or credit card, are available to the School for immediate use and are tax-deductible for the donor.

★ Appreciated Stocks and Securities

Gifts of appreciated stocks and securities can be tax deductible for the donor and may provide the donor with an exemption on capital gains tax on the stock's appreciation. Please contact the Development Office if you are interested in transferring stock.

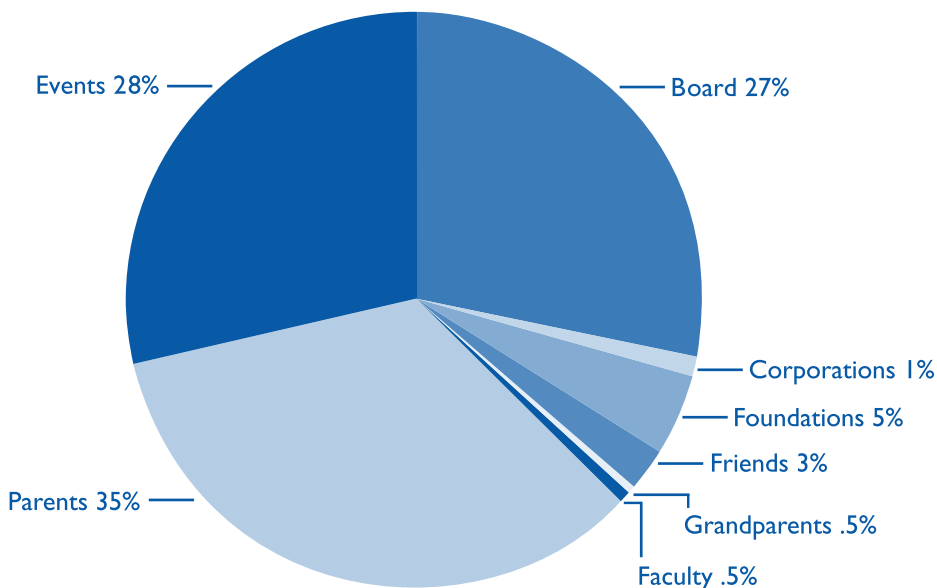
★ Matching Gifts

Companies will often match gifts to CDS. If your employer offers a matching program, your donation can be greatly increased.

★ Planned Gifts

Please contact the Development Office to find out more about remembering CDS in your estate.

Donations by Constituency



Black & White Spring Ball and Auction

Thank you to our many generous Auction donors and volunteers. We extend our gratitude to the following individuals and businesses who supported the 2004 Children's Day School Black & White Spring Ball and Auction, held on March 20, 2004 and co-chaired by Emma Donovan and Lisa Eltinge.

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New Library

The hard work of many volunteer parents, friends and library co-chairs Sue Barnett and Debra Levin has paid off in the beautiful new CDS library. Elementary and middle school students use the collection for research as well as to check out books, and preschoolers often choose books to read during story time. The library has become a welcoming place to read, think and enjoy.



David Minus Science Center Campaign

Led by the generosity of the Minus Family, the David Minus Science Center Campaign made possible the construction of a beautiful science resource center for CDS. The entire Children's Day School community thanks those who helped build what has quickly become an integral element of learning and exploration at CDS.



The Minus Family at the David Minus Science Center Dedication: Justin ('06), Erin ('10) and Hae-Lim Minus.



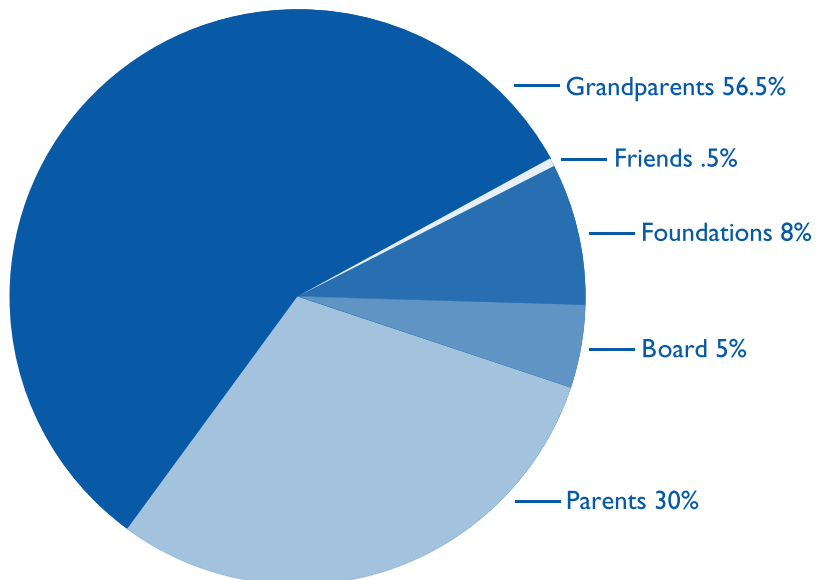
Third grader Marina Richard ('10) observes ants under a new microscope. The David Minus Science Center's facilities are available for all students.

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Katherine Hines, third grade head teacher, makes use of new CDS science equipment with Vikram Nigam (10).



Board Chair Tracy Kirkham delivers a welcome speech at Back-to-School Night.

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Faculty

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 James Bannister, *Preschool Teacher*
 Anne Bennett,
Second Grade Teacher
 Carrie Birgbauer,
First Grade Head Teacher
 Teresa Calle-Streicher,
Preschool Teacher
 Josh Connor,
Second Grade Afternoon Teacher
 Jim Flanigan, *Athletic Director*
 Doug Garfinkel,
Middle School Science & Math
 Michael Gast,
First Grade Afternoon Teacher
 Lauren Gersick,
Kindergarten Afternoon Teacher
 Carmen Gerughty,
Preschool Teacher
 Rob Gillespie,
*Third/Fourth Grade
 Afternoon Teacher*
 Lily Hoi,
Preschool Bathroom Monitor
 Inna Kish, *Preschool Teacher*
 Candy Mabry,
Preschool Head Teacher
 Elizabeth McClellan, *Art*
 Gladys Miyahira,
Kindergarten Teacher
 Robyn Moss, *Second Grade Teacher*
 Brittany Musler,
Second Grade Head Teacher
 Megan O'Grady,
Kindergarten Teacher
 Gretchen Ott,
Preschool Head Teacher
 Amanda Perla,
Third/Fourth Grade Teacher
 Andre Perry,
Middle School Humanities
 Emilie Rohrbach, *Music*
 Sara Scripps,
Preschool Outside Teacher
 Alicia Sheridan,
Preschool Head Teacher
 Karen Slovak, *Art*
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 Paula Symonds,
Third/Fourth Grade Head Teacher
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Environmental Education Teacher
 Ngoc Tran, *Preschool Teacher*
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 Emily Van Allen,
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Children's Day School Quarterly, Spring 2005

Editors: Marion Quinones, Aimee Giles

Design: Hilary Duwe, pH7designlab.com

Memberships and Affiliations

- ★ CAIS: California Association of Independent Schools (provisional member)
- ★ NAIS: National Association of Independent Schools (provisional member)

Mission Statement

The mission of Children's Day School is to educate children to their full potential by nurturing and challenging them intellectually, physically, socially and morally. We believe that education is an enterprise through which children share in and contribute to the intellectual, cultural, social and moral resources of the larger community. Moreover, we believe children are best able to develop their own powers of thought and understanding through active participation in personally and socially meaningful work.

We are committed to an educational program that is project-based, integrated across academic disciplines and grounded in the practice of social responsibility. Our curriculum is designed to encourage a love of learning and to foster an attitude of caring for self, for others, for ideas, for the natural environment and for the human-made world.

As a community, Children's Day School strives to be compassionate and generous, to value diversity, and to promote justice and respect for all people regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, abilities or family circumstance.



333 Dolores Street
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