



The CDS Weekly

...Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432
September 18, 2003

Great News!

At the Landmark's Board hearing yesterday, CDS was unanimously approved for the installation of the temporary Bungalows for a 10-year period.

The next (and final) step is the Planning Commission hearing on October 2nd. We are hoping for a good turn out of support for this final hearing, since there has been some neighborhood opposition. Stay tuned for more information in coming *Weeklies*.

Words from Rick

Service, Community and Academic Achievement

So many schools like to talk about their "community service" programs. Even the Clinton Administration liked to talk about the importance of teaching "volunteerism," and Bush the Elder liked to talk about, "A thousand points of light." For most people, "community service" is seen as teaching altruism, often as an antidote for our fundamental self-centeredness. It reminds me of Tom Lehrer's "National Brotherhood Week," i.e. "Be grateful that it doesn't last all year." I think most people have it wrong.

Service is not an antidote for self-centeredness. Done properly, community service is enthusiastic involvement with others in such a way that we ourselves are strengthened. It is about making a difference, and making a difference simultaneously makes one somebody. Those who work in the farm on weekends are not so much learning service as learning that they matter. (See, "Diary of a Family Farmer" by Michelle Hecht on page 3.)

Uri Bronfenbrenner (a leading authority on the family) used to say, "Do you realize it is distinctly possible that a child can reach the age of 18 without ever having done something upon which someone else depends?" Here is a story from the first full week of school as told to me by Ms. Elizabeth, one of our Art teachers:

Today I saw two preschool boys, James and Ty from the Starfish class, run into each other, head on, smacking heads together. I saw James' face start to crumble into a cry just as Ty reached out with both arms and held him in a bear hug for several seconds. When the hug ended I saw a complete look of relief on James. He wiped his own forehead. Ty reached out and patted James on the head and the two boys ran off together joining the rest of the Starfish class.

James and Ty both made a difference, and they made a difference to each other.

The main thing that bothers me about "community service" as

~ This Week's Hot Dates ~



Friday, September 19th
Preschool Portraits

Tuesday, September 23rd
8:30 a.m. —
Library Meeting

Thursday, September 25th
5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.
State of the School Night, Part I
This is an Adults Only Event
Extended Program Closes at 5:00 pm

Thank You!

- ▶ To Debra Levin for donating a basketball hoop for preschoolers!
- ▶ To the anonymous friend of CDS who left a preschool ride-in car on the play yard!
- ▶ To Marion Quinones for surprising the PM program children and staff with two delicious watermelons for their snack on Monday!
- ▶ To former parent Phil Greenberg for donating a child's bike and helmet!
- ▶ To Sam Hunt, Ray McFadden and James Kelly for volunteering their time and skills to build adult-size picnic tables!
- ▶ To the parents who responded to the 1st grade wish list:
 - Kris Desby – a refrigerator
 - Stephanie Holdenried – a globe
 - Tina Corse – musical instruments, games, costumes, fabric, and couch slip cover.

it is customarily practiced and talked about is that it is something on the side—perhaps an extra-curricular activity. At CDS being of service to others is part of everything we do. It is a part of life. It is essential to a person's discovery of their self-worth. And it is an important part of their academic achievement.

Our classes are such good learning communities because the students have learned the disciplines not only of

speaking up, but also of listening. They are finding their voice and at the same time creating the conditions in which others can find their voices. When you walk into each classroom you experience the collaborative activity that is an integral dimension of our students' learning. Involvement in the community is integral to the curriculum. Last week I reported on how the third and fourth graders got involved in the food allergy issue at an East Bay school. It is not so much that the kids are thinking "service" as they are aware of connection. Something that happens in the East Bay is something they care about, and they immediately arrive at the question, "What can we do about it?" As I reported two weeks ago, the central theme of the 5th and 6th grade curriculum is "can an individual make a difference?" To teach this by dealing only with historical figures would have only a marginal impact. They will begin their study of Ancient Greece and China and modern America with a study of their city and their relationship to it.

Community and ones relationship with it is not ancillary to education, but central to it; for education is leading a person's spirit out into the world to function gracefully and respectfully within it.

Academics that rest on education will take root and grow in a mutually reinforcing cycle. Academics that never play a role in a person's education will wither like a plant cut off from its roots. I sometimes wish that at the end of the day a parent would say: "Did you make a difference today?" rather than "Did you have a good day?" It's crazy, so don't do it, but let's collaborate to remind ourselves that one of the main tasks of optimizing academic achievement is to remind ourselves that our focus must be on achievement-in-community rather than achievement in a vacuum.

—Rick Ackerly, Head of School

Annual Fund Drive

Every non-profit organization depends on its annual fund drive to meet their budget, and CDS is no exception. The Development Committee met this week to begin planning. Every family will receive a letter in mid-October explaining what we need, why we need it and asking them to participate to the best of their ability. Then, on Oct. 21st and 22nd, parents will take to the phones to ask for your commitment. Plan now to say, "Yes, I'll help," when you're called!

—Beth Ditlefsen, Director of Development

Extended Program Update

Electives Packets have been sent home in backpacks this week. Please look them over and sign up soon. The deadline for registering for electives is Wednesday, October 1st, at 6:00 p.m. If for some reason you haven't received an electives packet by Thursday, please call me at extension 15 and I'll send a new one home with your child.

On the agenda for the afternoon program this week are activities including: a dance party, cooking projects, a clay workshop, and a book-making project!

Check the PM calendars by the front door to find out what happens when!

—Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator

Hola Parents!

I am very excited to begin a new school year at CDS as the Elementary and Middle School Spanish Teacher. I have already started working with the children and they are all responding very well. As some of you may already know, there has been a change in the Spanish Program. Rather than bouncing between English and Spanish in our lessons, the students and I will only be speaking Spanish throughout the entire lesson. While the children initially seemed shocked and nervous by this decision, they are adjusting and doing their best. The month of September has thus far been a review of what we already know – some vocabulary, expressions, songs and games. I encourage all parents to learn one new word or phrase every week to practice with your child. This will be helpful in strengthening your child's interest and participation in Spanish at school. You can get started right away by practicing the greeting from this week's lesson:

Hola. Como estas?/Hello. How are you?

Muy bien, gracias. I am fine, thank you.

Finally, a reminder to you all that September 15th – October 15th is Hispanic Heritage Month. It is a time to recognize the many contributions of Latinos to life in the United States. To celebrate, the Spanish classes will keep participating in different activities. We will be identifying local or regional names derived from Spanish origin, we'll enjoy a Latin American festival of foods, and we'll celebrate folkdance and song from a specific Spanish speaking country. If there are any families of Hispanic origin who would like to participate or contribute an idea, please contact me at x37. I welcome all your suggestions and look forward to a wonderful Spanish speaking year at CDS!

—Consuelo Aparicio-Cercos, Spanish Specialist

Lucky and JoJo Want Ewe to be a Family Farmer!

Are you interested in spending a little more time with Lucky and JoJo, our new sheep? Wondering what it's like to have a flock of hens peck grain out of your hand? Join me on Saturday, September 27th at 9:30 a.m. for the Family Farmer Training. It should last approximately one hour. This training will provide you with all of the skills and resources you will need to care for the farm and garden during holidays and weekends when the school is closed. At the end of the training, you'll have the opportunity to sign up for a few weekends throughout the school year. Everyone of all levels of experience are encouraged to come. If you have any questions about the training or what the responsibilities of a family farmer are, please contact me at x21. Hope to see you there!

—Morgan Taggart, Environmental Education Teacher

Diary of a Family Farmer By Michelle Hecht

Monday, December 16, 2003

The key! A wave of panic rides over me. We are on farm duty next week and I am certain we will forget to pick up a key at the front desk. My anxious brain works overtime, inventing dozens of scenarios of animal suffering and doom.

Friday, December 20, 2003

Friday arrives. School is out for the holidays. On the shelf beside my house keys, the farm key rests. I exhale.

Sunday evening, December 22, 2003

I have set my alarm for 7:15, and Maya has set hers for 8:00. We plan to arrive at the farm by 9:00. We are excited with a capital X.

Monday, December 23, 2003

As I dress for the farm, my mind wanders back to our very first Family Farmer tour of duty and I smile. I was so nervous – it was all such unfamiliar territory. Like most CDS Family Farmers, we are city cats: Bob from Tokyo, me from New York. Chicken always came fried, sautéed with ginger and cashews. I am sure at least once I referred to Corrie (the sheep) as “the goat.” I remember going through the chores checklist and feeling overwhelmed.

“Which one is the straw, and which one is the hay?”

“How many cups of scratch can the kids *really* feed to the chickens?”

“Why can’t I get my child to help me scoop this poop?”

It is 8:30. With key in hand, I pack everyone into the car: Maya, Bob, even baby Emil and Grandma Dorothy who is visiting from Vancouver. As I repeat “0333” over and over in my head, I feel confident. I think.

Wednesday evening, December 25, 2003

Our three-day tour of farm duty has just ended. What a change from last year. With the reassuring awareness of the resilience of the farm, and Morgan’s detailed to-do list, I was unencumbered by my usual New York neuroses. As I cleaned and fed, shoveled and scrubbed, I felt my entire self take on the pace and the rhythm of the farm life. I was at peace.

While locking up for the last time, Bob and I talked about how right it felt to spend our holiday as a family taking care of the CDS farm. But I think there was more to it than just doing our part to volunteer for CDS, or having a place to go other than somewhere crowded and commercial. I have a need right now, beyond the spirit of the season, to nurture. I think we all do. We are bombarded with daily messages of the aggressive nature of the world, and of our own country. Immersing myself in the care of Corrie and Poppy (the sheep), Fluffy and her friends (the chickens), and in the gentle life that our children share with these animals and earth, refocused my world vision through a more compassionate lens.

Thanks, Morgan, for the opportunity.

Updates to the School Year Calendar

To find out about changes to the School Year Calendar, visit our website at www.cds-sf.org. Click on the News and Events page, followed by the School Calendar page to pull up the latest info!

Do You Prefer *The Weekly* by Email?

Help! The computer virus of this last July hit CDS particularly hard, and one of the casualties was our *CDS Weekly* emailing list. If you’ve received the *CDS Weekly* via email in the past and would like to continue helping us reduce our paper usage, please drop us a quick email at cdsweekly@cds-sf.org and remind us who you are. Also, let us know the name and class of the child your hard copy usually goes home with so we can remove him or her from the classroom distribution list. Thanks!

CDS Parent-Teacher-Trustee- Administrator Association PTTA Update

Many thanks to all for the terrific turnout, weather and family fun at last weekend’s Welcome Picnic. Extra gratitude points to Andre Ross for carrying many watermelons and much water to the picnic site, all five members of the Richard family taping, set-up and nametagging crew, Kate Moses and Katherine Whitney for operating the CDS boutique, Betsy Cordes for the class signs, Anne Alexander for slicing melons, Adam Feuerstein and probably many others who cleaned up after I had gone home, and to everyone for eating so much watermelon. A good time was had by all.

And now for a note on keeping in the loop: courtesy of our own Mr. Secretary Feuerstein, minutes of the September PTTA meeting are now available and circulating among classroom liaisons via e-mail. If you would like your very own copy of the minutes and the minutes of future meetings, please send me an e-mail at mquinones@fbm.com and I will add your address to the exclusive e-mail minutes distribution list. We will also post minutes, agendas and other PTTA items of interest in the first floor hallway at school. For future meetings, we hope to have a preliminary agenda prepared in time for publication in the *Weekly* prior to the meeting, so stay tuned and let me know if you would like to add an item to the agenda. Thanks.

—Marion Quinones, PTTA President

Library Meeting

If you’d like to be involved with the library or simply want an update on the exciting changes that are occurring, please join us for our first library meeting of the school year, on Tuesday, September 23rd, from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. This

will be an opportunity to join a subcommittee or simply let us know that you're available to shelf or cover books when you have an occasional free hour. The subcommittees are: curriculum, grants, special events (speakers/authors/illustrators), bookfair, promotion, library design and development. A poll will be taken to find out the best time of day for committee members to meet. If you can't attend, please send one of us an email with your preferences of days, times and the role you would like to play.

—Sue Barnett (TB and 2nd grade parent)

suebarnett@yahoo.com &

Debra Levin (1st and 5/6 grade parent) djlevin78@aol.com

Friday Morning Coffee

Suffering from separation anxiety...from fellow adults?! Try to schedule a few free minutes into your Friday morning to join other parents for hot coffee and grown up conversation outside in the yard after drop off, 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. starting this Friday. See you there!

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

Contact Marion Quinones at 701-1957 or

MQuinones@fbm.com.

Upcoming on the CDS Calendar



Friday, September 19th

Preschool Portraits

(If you child missed their individual photos, make-ups will be scheduled in November.)

Tuesday, September 23rd

8:30 a.m. — 9:30 a.m.

Library Meeting

Thursday, September 25th

5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

State of the School Night, Part I

This is an Adults Only Event

Extended Program Closes at 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 27th

9:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m.

Family Farmer Training

Wednesday, October 1st

6:00 p.m.

Deadline for registry in Fall Electives

Thursday, October 9th

5:30 — 7:30

Back to School Night

This is an Adults Only Event

Extended Program Closes at 5:00 p.m.

Friday, October 10th

Community Breakfast

How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.

Submissions are to be received **no later than Wednesday at 8:00 am**. Please email them to [cgsweekly@cgs-sf.org](mailto:cdsweekly@cds-sf.org)