



∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432
November 19, 2003

Words From Rick *Delighting in Our Children II* *Who's School is This?*

As you know, we are in the middle of a teacher search. Candidates voice their delight in the school in a variety of ways, but they are most consistently impressed by the students, and in particular, the students' academic preparation. One reported that our second graders are as advanced as the third graders she taught at a Pacific Heights school, saying the second graders were "They are where my third graders were by the end of the year." Yes, our sense that our students are excelling academically has a basis in reality.

Upon hearing this, some have found it surprising. I am not surprised. The whole point of the CDS approach is that it maximizes academic achievement. Lessons are taught in which students are treated as if they are mathematicians, authors, and researchers. Activities are presented in which the students are doing work that is meaningful to them and to others. A culture is created where it is safe to be yourself. A cooperative classroom, project-based learning, a community of learners ... these are the essential elements of excellent education.

Linking these elements of our learning community is a belief in the children. Children's Day School has an apostrophe in it. The 5th and 6th graders are able to tell you why.

Self-confidence is built not so much by success, but by increasing the incidence of decision-making. Chris Argyris, one of my teachers in graduate school, used to teach that self-esteem is built by defining goals and designing the paths to the goals. What makes goals fruitful is not so much the reasonableness of the goal, but whose goal it is. What makes a path the wrong one or the right one is who chose it. If I shoot for my goal and miss, I shoot again or pick a new goal. If the path I chose led me into difficulty, I choose a path out of the difficulty. That is how a life works. If I am trying to pursue someone else's goal, or to use a path someone else chose for me, we can predict failure of a deeper, more serious sort.

It is possible to see this dynamic at work at the kindergarten level. At Children's Day School, our admission process has been successful in yielding children who will succeed in our school. We do not test for academic skills; they do not need to be able to write their name or read. Early skill mastery does not predict success. Instead, a group of four to five-year-olds spends an hour together in a mock kindergarten class with one teacher teaching and three others observing. I spend that hour chatting with the parents. After everyone goes home we sit in a circle and go through a checklist of behaviors that we have determined predict success as students at CDS.

∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



Thursday, November 20th

Friday, November 21st

Parent-Teacher Conferences

No School on these days

Reminder to sign up for your conference at the front hallway bulletin board!

Childcare available from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

No childcare available between Noon and 1:00 p.m.

*Please Note: Care is only available for the half-hour you are in a conference with your child's teacher.

Tuesday, November 25th

Photo Retake Day

All preschool students must have their individual photo retaken

&

All other students wanting to retake their portrait

Wednesday, November 26th

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day

Noon Dismissal

(No Extended Care and No Electives on this day)

Thursday, November 27th

Friday, November 28th

Thanksgiving Break

No School

Thank You!

- ▶ To all of the CDS families who showed their support at the Planning Commission meeting last week.
- ▶ To Susie Carlson, Stephanie Holdenried, Bree Humphries and Kristen Wurz for helping out with admission tours this week.

What all these behaviors have in common is that they show that the child is in the habit of taking responsibility for his or her own learning.

A particularly nice example of a child who had difficulty with last year's admission test is Freddy. When we went down the list of behaviors we were looking for, there were none. He didn't launch himself into the classroom at choice time. He did not try to find something he was

interested in as the other children did. Instead, he looked to the adults to find out what he was supposed to do. There was no evidence of his engaging with other students - only adults. He had learned to be dependent on adults for direction.

Interestingly enough, I had a long talk with the father while we waited for the session to end. He was trying to impress me that he was a good parent by all the various ways he was preparing him academically for kindergarten: (flash cards, picking harder and harder books, etc.)

The two phenomena correlate; in fact, one causes the other. Parent anxiety about academic achievement causes children to under-achieve. Even if it looks as if it is working, it is not. Even a child who is getting straight A's is suffering the negative side effects of achieving success to satisfy someone else, striving to measure up rather than striving for self-expression and self-discovery. If a student is capable of straight A's motivated by parental anxiety, imagine what the child would be capable of motivated by the love of learning itself, and the desire to discover their own talents, develop their own interests and pursue their own dreams.

Freddy's self-esteem was pre-empted. But the game is not over. It is never too late to begin supporting children in their quest for self-determination. It all begins with acting as if they are on a journey to find their way gracefully in the world, guided by their own teacher within.

—Rick Ackerly, Head of School

Bungalows or Bust II

The Trustees and the Administration opened a bottle of champagne last week. The Planning Commission approved our application to build three new bungalow classrooms last Thursday afternoon. It was a great event. Several of our neighbors, seniors from Notre Dame Plaza and parents joined the trustees who spoke in favor of the project. Two sixth graders, Nicole Wigfull and Hayden Cory, also spoke eloquently about what the school means to them. Here is what they said:

Hello. My name is Haden Cory. I am 12 years old and in the 6th grade at Children's Day School. I started preschool at CDS nine years ago when I was 3. Now I am the oldest and the tallest child at CDS.

I feel that CDS is unique in many ways. We have a farm with two Welsh Mountain sheep and four chickens and all of the children take turns looking after our animals. Each class has a plot in the garden where they can grow vegetables or herbs or flowers. When I was in the pre-K class, we grew an assortment of vegetables and made pizza for our end-of-the-year party.

The preschool at CDS is great. Children start school at three years old. Having the preschoolers there is great for me because I am an only child. Not only do I like the younger kids, but they like me, too. They like to be pushed in the swings and to have piggyback rides. They like having a big kid friend to wave to in the halls. Sometimes they just need a hug or a lap to sit in during an assembly. Having the

preschool classes at CDS gives us older kids the chance to be a buddy, to read aloud to little children who don't know how to read yet, and to help them learn.

But, not only do the younger kids learn from us; we learn from them, too. We learn how to be a leader. Not many middle schoolers get to be mentors; it is a really great thing to have the chance to be a friend and advisor to the younger kids.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to be heard.
—Haden Cory, CDS 6th Grader

This is what Nicole had to say:

Hello everybody. My name is Nicole and this is my first year at CDS. Although I am new to this school, it feels like I have been here forever because of the little kids, well, the preschoolers. The reason that I feel this way is because I am able to be a role model for the preschoolers and I'm helping the school. For instance, every Friday our school holds an all-school assembly and recently one of the preschool classes (Teddy Bears) performed a song and dance honoring Latino Heritage Month. You could tell that they were shy at the beginning because of their facial expressions, until the 5th and 6th graders started to cheer them on. The preschoolers felt better to have us as their cheerleaders and they feel safe around us. If the preschoolers were not here, it wouldn't be the same kind of place.

If CDS can go on forever, then I'll be here for the rest of my life.

—Nicole Wigfull, CDS 6th Grader

Specialists Holding Conferences

Specialists will also be holding conferences on this Thursday and Friday. Sign-up sheets are posted on the same bulletin board with the class conference sign up sheets. Please make sure to sign up for a 30-minute conference with Miss Consuelo, Spanish Teacher; Miss Elizabeth/Miss Karen, Art Teachers; Miss Emilie, Music Teacher; or Ms. Morgan, Environmental Education Resource Teacher. Mr. Jim will be unavailable for conferences on those days, but can be contacted at 861-5432 x37 to schedule another time.

Photo Retake Day

On Tuesday, November 25th, all preschool students will need to have their individual school portraits retaken.

Unfortunately, the film that was used for those portraits was faulty, so all individual portraits for the three preschool classes will need to be re-shot. All classroom group photos turned out fine and will not need to be retaken. **If your child is in preschool, please have them dressed nicely for their portrait that day.** Elementary and Middle School photos will be returned soon. **If your child was absent on the original photo day, if you are new to the school since September 18th or if you are unhappy with the photo taken of your child:**

- 1) His/Her photo may be retaken on Retake Day. If this is his/her first time, order envelopes are available at the front desk. If this is a retake, you must return your complete portrait package for one free retake. Please do not return your class photo.

or

- 2) The photographer will refund your money.
 - a) For a full refund, you must return all of the photos within 30 days of your Portrait Package delivery.
 - b) For a partial refund, you can keep the Class Group Photo and return the Portrait Package within 30 days.

The photographer has assured me that all photo packages will be returned before the holidays. We apologize for the inconvenience.

—Amanda Coggin, Assistant to the Head, x12

Help Spare The Air at Afternoon Pick-up

In the interest of decreasing pollution, please consider turning off your engine if your vehicle is idling in line for more than a few minutes during pick-up. However, please remember that others also need to circle through the line — consider this not an invitation to linger but friendly encouragement to spare the air when circumstances prevent a quick get-away! Thanks for your cooperation.

Sliding Scale Tuition

As you know, the founding vision of CDS is to provide an excellent education for children in the Bay Area regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or the ability to afford tuition. Our sliding scale tuition is one of the many manifestations of our core commitment to diversity. The families of approximately 33% of our students pay sliding scale tuition, making us a leader in economic diversity among independent schools in San Francisco. Financial support for the sliding scale is derived from the school's operating budget (i.e. tuition revenue and fundraising). CDS currently dedicates 18% of its operating budget to sliding scale tuition. Sliding scale tuition is available based on need.

If you are currently paying sliding scale tuition, you have been mailed information for the 2004-05 school year. If you did not receive this information and would like to, please contact Laurance de Vries, Business Manager, by phone (861-5432 x14) or email (laurance@cds-sf.org).

New this year, we are offering a sliding scale tuition workshop on December 3, 2003 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the faculty lounge.

Sliding scale tuition deadlines:

By December 18, 2003:

1. Complete a Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) and mail to School and Student Services (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey;
2. Submit a copy of your PFS, a copy of your 2002 tax forms (1040), a signed copy of IRS form 4506 and a CDS Parent Contribution form to the Business Office.

By February 5, 2004:

3. Submit a copy of your 2003 tax forms (1040) to the Business Office.

Admission Update

Thanks to you all, the word is out about CDS - this is a great school for children (and families). How do I know? Because Martha is swamped answering zillions of calls from prospective parents, and the tours are larger than ever.

In preparation for last week's Board meeting I ran some statistics comparing this year's admission activity to last year's. The numbers are so exciting I wanted to share them with the whole community. As of 11/13/03, we have received 48% more calls (388 total) this year than last year, and have scheduled 53% more people (238 total) for tours this year than last. Getting more specific, we have received 82% more calls from families of prospective students in grades 1-7 this year than last year, and have given 220% more tours to this same group! It has seemed like we are busier than ever - and this confirms we really are.

How do almost all of the prospective parents hear about us? From you! I know this because we ask. So thank you for spreading the word about the excellent education your child is receiving at CDS.

—Aimee Giles, Director of Admission

Visit the CDS Middle School

Curious about our new middle school? Interested in seeing the MS students and faculty in action? A CDS parent who attended our CDS-parents-only tour a few weeks ago relayed to me how impressed she was with the middle school students and faculty. This visit confirmed for her that CDS' middle school really is as great as she had hoped. Thanks to her encouragement, I have scheduled 3 more opportunities for CDS parents to observe our new middle school class in action. The schedule is below. Parents of CDS children of ALL ages are invited - please come! RSVP to me if you plan to attend (415-861-5432 x22).

Middle school open house dates:

Friday, 12/5, 8:50 a.m. - Math with Mr. Doug

Monday, 12/8, 10:10 a.m. - Language Arts with Mr. Andre

Tuesday, 12/16, 1:45 p.m. - Science with Mr. Doug

—Aimee Giles, Director of Admission

Extended Program News

Winter Break Camp

Sign up packets for the upcoming Winter Break Camp have all been distributed. If you haven't received one, please ask for an extra copy at the front desk. The camp runs December 29-January 2 and is open to preschool, elementary, and middle school students. The camp is also

open to non-CDS families so spread the word to friends and neighbors! The theme for this year's winter camp is: The World's Celebrations. There will be lots of extra cooking, art, theater, and science activities, plus time to play and relax with good friends and fun teachers. Please assume that there is room for your child in the break camp unless you hear otherwise. We will not be sending home confirmation letters this year. Please continue to turn your registration forms in at the front desk or in Jenna's box on the third floor.

Childcare during Conferences

There will be **FREE** childcare offered while you attend student conferences on Thursday, November 20th and Friday, November 21st. Childcare is available starting at 8:00 am and ending at 5:00 pm. There will be no childcare available between 11:30-12:30 p.m. Please sign up directly at the front desk. Childcare will be held outside in the yard and/or in the third floor art space. Please contact Martha or Amanda if you have further questions. ***Please Note: Care is only available for the half-hour you are in a conference with your child's teacher.**

Electives Make Up Information

The following electives classes will be held through the December 5th make up week, to ensure each course has a complete session:

Monday, Dec. 1: Drama, Gymnastics, and Spanish
 Tuesday, Dec. 2: Computer Tech
 Wednesday, Dec. 3: Piano
 Thursday, Dec. 4: Cooking, Chess
 Friday, Dec. 5: Toy Story, Movie Making

Extra Notes: Spanish will NOT BE HELD on Monday, November 24th, but WILL be held on Monday, December 1st AND Monday, December 8th.

I will be out of the office until December 1st. Please direct any questions to Amanda, Martha, or Laurance, or leave me an email or phone message and I'll respond when I get back.
 —Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator, x15

Grandparents' & Special Friends' Day

We're looking forward to having grandparents and special friends visiting us at CDS next Wednesday, November 26th. For those who have more than one child to visit or who can't stay at school the entire morning, the following schedule will tell you when special events are planned in the classrooms or on the yard. Parents are encouraged to visit any classroom; this is a great opportunity for you to visit the classroom where your child will be next year.

All adults are welcome to attend the program at Notre Dame Plaza at 11:15.

8:30 a.m. Morning Meeting in all classrooms
 9:00-9:30 Kindergarten (Emily): PE on the yard
 9:00-10:00 Preschool: Open art activities on the yard
 Leaping Lizards: Art in the classroom
 2nd Grade: Project in the classroom
 9:45-10:15 3rd/4th Grade: Spanish in the classroom

10:00-10:30 Preschool: snack and group time in the classrooms
 Kindergartens: Bat Project Culminating Event
 10:30-11:00 First Grade: Culminating Event
 10:30-11:15 Preschool: outside on the yard
 11:15 Begin assembling in the Community Room at Notre Dame Plaza (adults only)
 11:30 Program in the Community Room at Notre Dame Plaza:
Poetry and Rhythm in Performance
 Selections performed by the 5th and 6th graders.
 Greetings from Rick Ackerly, Head of School
 Door Prizes
 12:00 noon Dismissal from classrooms or at the double doors.

—Beth Ditlefsen, Development Director

A Clean Well-Lighted Place For Books Hosts Annual Book Fair

4th Annual CDS Holiday Book Fair
 Wednesday, December 10th, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
 A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books
 601 Van Ness Avenue, Opera Plaza

If you would like to volunteer to help with the book fair, please contact Sally Nielsen at sn@hausrath.com or (415) 861-4575.

Is it possible to have a great time, support our school library *and* cross items off of your holiday shopping list? On December 10th it is. Come to the CDS Book Fair to purchase books, enjoy terrific conversation, sip wine and munch hors d'oeuvres. Twenty percent of *all* sales – books purchased for the CDS library AND gift books for your family and friends – will go toward the library's book fund.

When you buy one or more titles for the library from a table of pre-selected, teacher-approved books, these books will help to support classroom work and build the library collection, which is available to every child at CDS.

Choosing gift books for your family and friends will be easier and more fun this year, thanks to the "CDS Recommends" books we're highlighting at the book fair. There's sure to be something for everyone on your list in our wide-ranging selection of titles personally recommended by our parents, faculty, staff and students. "CDS Recommends" titles – everything from cookbooks to poetry, novels to art books – will be displayed on special tables, with placards giving short descriptions and the recommenders' names.

Childcare Available at CDS
During Book Fair

Wednesday, December 10, 6-9:30 PM

While you are enjoying a delightful evening of shopping, browsing, chatting, eating and drinking at A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books, your children are welcome to a cozy evening together at CDS. Extended Care teachers Rob Gillespie and Michael Gast have offered to keep the children entertained with play, yummy food & a video appropriate for all ages. The cost is \$5 per hour/child. They may come dressed in their pj's if they like! Siblings are welcome, but sorry, no infants. Please contact Robin Wander at 286-3689 to reserve a space now.

CDS Parent-Teacher -Trustee-Administrator
Association: PTTA Update

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. - 9:00 a.m.

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

Contact Marion Quinones at 701-1957 or
MQuinones@fbm.com.

Do You Prefer *The Weekly* by Email?

If you would like to help us reduce our paper usage and receive the *Weekly* via email, please drop us a quick email at cdsweekly@cds-sf.org and give us your email address. 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!

Upcoming on the CDS Calendar



Thursday, November 20th

Friday, November 21st

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front hallway bulletin board!**

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8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day

Noon Dismissal

Thursday, November 27th

Friday, November 28th

Thanksgiving Break

No School

Monday, December 1st - Friday, December 5th

Fall Electives Make-up Week

Wednesday, December 3rd

Sliding Scale Tuition Information Night

7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Faculty Lounge

Wednesday, December 10th

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

4th Annual CDS Holiday Book Fair

A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books

601 Van Ness Avenue, Opera Plaza

(Childcare available at CDS, call Robin Wander at: 286-3689)

Thursday, December 18th

5:00 p.m.

2004-05 Sliding Scale Tuition Applications Due
in the Business Office

How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.

Submissions are to be received **no later than Wednesday
at 8:00 a.m.** Please email them to cdsweekly@cds-sf.org.