



∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432
January 15, 2004

Words From Rick

Nourishing the Soul in the Curriculum

Before the vacation one of our parents gave me The World According to Mr. Rogers with the expectation it might give me some inspiration for my weekly articles. Not wanting to disappoint, here's one:

It's not the honors and the prizes and the fancy outsides of life that ultimately nourish our souls. It's knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our very being is firm.

A school needs to keep its eye forever on this message. The temptations of honors, prizes and other extrinsic rewards, as well as the pressures of measuring up, put the soul at risk—it's risky to be alive. In fact one could say that there's a tension in life between the demands, the rewards and the requirements of the environment and the dictates of a person's soul. This tension is not bad, and indeed, need not be feared. On the contrary, to live is to live in the tension.

A school can be a place where children learn to live in that tension and enjoy it. When a three year-old walks in the gate of the school on the first day of school in September this tension is most palpable. It is present in all children although its manifestation varies widely. Faith in the child's soul and in the child as a capable organism—complete in all its imperfections—is the secret to helping the child live in the tension happily. This kind of faith allows us to stand by our children in their challenges without rescuing them.

What is a continuous delight for me is how our teachers manifest this principle not only outside the curriculum, but inside it. On a bulletin board outside the 3rd/4th classroom one can see, for instance, the work of children who are facing up to the challenges of school and are in touch with their souls at the same time. Those souls (as well as minds, hearts and bodies) have been nourished both by the clear, steady confidence of their teachers and by a wide range of academic challenges. They have experienced the challenges of imagining themselves journeying across the continent with Lewis and Clark, learning about dangers, calculating distances, imagining how their lives might have been threatened and what they would need to do to survive, discovering their own spirituality through studying the spirituality of the native Americans, learning about how Native Americans taught their children, reading their myths, and writing their own. They learned the relationship between the games native Americans played, the animals they killed, and how they balanced their lives with the lives of other creatures.

All that was behind the scenes. What shows on the wall is their reaction to the assignment of making a picture of their animal

∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



Wednesday, January 21st

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Parent Education Night
Faculty lounge

Monday, January 26th

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Knit and Spin Club
Art studio

Monday, January 26th

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Black and White Baaall and Auction Planning Meeting
Faculty Lounge

Thank You!

- ▶ Kathleen Cologne (Tyler Di Grande's mom) for the donation of mat board and wood to the art department.
- ▶ To Joe Becker, Sam Hunt, Winnie von Ehrenburg and Don Zirulnik for transporting, carrying, setting up and taking down the stage and equipment for the Holiday Performance.
- ▶ To the Boys and Girls Club for the use of their facility for the Hoiday Performance.
- ▶ To Michael Dingle, Kathleen Cologne, and Mary Svirsky for donating art materials.
- ▶ To Diana and Sam Hunt for donating the materials for the kindergarten loft in Ms. Emily's room.
- ▶ To Sam Hunt and Ray McFadden for sharing their time and talent to build the kindergarten loft.
- ▶ To Doug Garfinkel for educating attendees at the PTTA meeting regarding graphs, story lines and what $y=mx+b$ means.
- ▶ To all the parents who made our last Admission Open House of the school year a smashing success: Susi Alexander, Jonathan Burton, Susie Carlson, Patti Cazzato, Steve Donovan, Marianne Evans, Stephanie Holdenried, Bree Humphries, Debra Levin, Becca Nitzan, Carolina Reyes-Ouk and Kristen Wurz.
- ▶ To the parents who have helped out with admission tours and phone calls during the last few weeks: Susi Alexander, Karen Axel, Jo Biel, Lisa Eltinge and Stephanie Holdenried.

(the one they had earlier picked and researched), making it beautiful in an interesting and unusual way, and giving it the amount of reverence that the Native Americans would have given it. At the beginning of this week they

finished authoring poems honoring their animal. The high quality of their work would not have been possible without all the other dimensions of the project and outside of the context of a loving, supportive environment created by teachers who believed in the capabilities of the children and who trusted in their souls.

It requires a particular kind of teaching to ensure that children don't lose their internal enthusiasm for learning. One of the great beauties of the genius of this school is that it began with that kind of inspired teaching—teaching which keeps the students inspired. Once that kind of teaching gets started, it's contagious because it's so fun for everyone—so, well, inspiring

Another thing to remember is that this kind of teaching is always under pressure—always at risk. In our meritocratic society our natural inclination is to get anxious about whether or not our children are going to learn enough, or learn the right stuff and measure up. This fear is behind the standards movement, which is ironically and predictably causing students' performance to go down. The same fear is behind the panic of getting into good schools. This same fear makes our teachers feel under pressure to compromise their educational principles and makes our children anxious.

Schools are always in danger of taking their eyes off this Fred Rogers Principle. Schools have a nasty tendency to use externals like grades and awards to motivate. Those externals too often become everyone's focus. The challenges of school can be hard for kids—that's why we call them challenges. But then that's why we send them to school—to be challenged. My vision of perfection is that the challenges themselves nurture the soul as they expand the mind.

Thank you Fred for reminding us, thank you, Anonymous Parent, for the gift of The World According to Mr. Rogers, and thank you CDS teachers for making our dream come true.

Hooray! The Knit and Spin Club Resumes

Join an enthusiastic group of knitters as we dust off our needles and get back to work. Beginners are welcome to participate as we knit, crochet and spin yarn together on Monday evening, January 26th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the art studio. A fun way to connect with your CDS community!

Reclaim Your Child's Lost Clothes!

Look for your child(ren)'s missing jackets, sweaters and hats this Friday, January 16th. The lost and found items will be on tables in the yard or on the first floor in the event of rain.

Parent Education Night

CDS teachers have created a fun and informative evening on limit setting entitled "What CDS teachers know that parents can use at home." The evening, complete with wine and other beverages, cheese and desserts (courtesy of the first grade parents), will be a supportive and interactive opportunity to talk in small groups with other parents and teachers about raising children. Bring your stories from the trenches, your sense of humor and even your children for free pajama childcare

provided by the fabulous team of Ms. Karen and Ms. Morgan. Quiet activities, snacks and a movie will be provided. Come join us for this year's parent education night! Wednesday, January 21st, from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. in the Faculty Lounge.

The CDS Parking Lot

Please keep your speed s-l-o-w while dropping off your children in the morning. Around 8:20 a.m. every morning, there can be a back-up of cars while pulling into the drop-off line, so please do not park in the fire lane to the right. This confuses drivers into thinking the line of cars is backed up and further congests the lot.

I received this note in my mailbox before the break and was tinkled pink to see a parent fresh on the case. Thank you for your concern and let's try to heed the words below:

To parents who will (hopefully) recognize themselves,

Many of you express concern about your child's reading ability, spelling vocabulary and comprehension test scores. Preschool and kindergarten parents are constantly asking "When will my child learn to read?"

I am asking "When will CDS parents learn to read?"

In reviewing the CDS Parent Handbook, and The CDS Weekly, I found no less than 18 mentions of the drive-through drop off and pick-up protocol, which clearly, but politely states:

- *Please stay in your car.*
- *Please do not park in teachers' reserved parking spots.*
- *Please do not park in NDP reserved parking spots.*
- *Please do not park in the fire lane.*
- *Please do not park in handicapped parking spots.*
- *Please stay in your car.*
- *Please stay in your car.*
- *and..*
- *Please stay in your car.*

Let's set a good example for our children by reading, comprehending and abiding by school policy.

Respectfully submitted by a Frustrated Parent who seems to always be behind the car with no driver.

Extended Program News

Winter Electives

Electives began this week and we're off to a great start. Please check the roster posted at the front doors if you need to confirm your child's elective day, time or location.

Afternoon Art:

Students in the after-school program have been doing lots of amazing art projects. Please stop by the bulletin boards across the hall from the Leaping Lizard room to see some of their creative work on display.

The PM Program is Open to All!

Thanks to those of you who have helped to spread the

word about CDS opening its programs. Please continue to let people know that we've opened up the Break Week camps, Elective/ Enrichment Classes, and PM Program to children who don't attend CDS during the regular school year. For more information call Jenna at 861-5432 x 15.

—Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator

Class Photos and One Last Retake Day

By now, those of you who ordered them should have received your child's individual school portraits as well as their class portrait. If not, please contact Amanda at x12.

We have scheduled yet another Photo Retake Day on **Thursday, February 26th** for those wanting retakes or still missing portraits due to the technical difficulties. **The Starfish and Leaping Lizard group photo will also be retaken on that day.**

Thank you for your patience.

—Amanda Coggin, Assistant to the Head, x12

Hola a Todos!

CDS kids are compiling a wonderful package of work including drawings and letters for their new Chilean friend, Sabrina. As some of you may remember reading in the last *Weekly*, Sabrina lives in Valparaiso, Chile and wrote our school to tell us about her beautiful home. Examples of the work on its way to Sabrina can be found on the Spanish board on the 2nd floor. Thanks kids for your enthusiasm!

Here are the frase de la semana:

- *El tiempo*, the weater

- *Hace frio*. It's cold.

- *Hace calor*. It's hot.

Muchas gracias y hasta la vista.

—Consuelo Aparacia-Cercos, Spanish Department

Binoculars...Anyone?

Got a pair of old binoculars sitting in the closet that you never use? The Environmental Education Program at CDS would love to take them off your hands. As many of you know, we have a couple of hawks that have taken up residence in the neighborhood. Their favorite perch at the moment is the cross on top of Mission Dolores. The kids love looking at the hawks, especially when they can get a closer view. If you have an old pair you would like to donate, just drop them off at the front desk. Thanks!

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

2004 Black and White Baaall and Auction Planning Meeting

Mark your calendars for the next annual baaall and auction planning meeting. The meeting will take place in the teachers' lounge on Monday, January 26th from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. The baaall and auction will take place this spring and we need

volunteers for a wide range of tasks including: decorations, food and wine, graphics, data entry, soliciting for auction items, ticket sales, check out, and much more. There is a job for everyone who is interested. If you have any questions about this meeting, please contact Robin Wander at (415)286-2689 or robinw@post.harvard.edu.

Friday Morning Coffee

Suffering from separation anxiety...from fellow adults? Schedule a few minutes in your Friday morning to join other parents for hot coffee and grown-up conversation 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?

Help us reduce our paper usage by receiving the *Weekly* via email. Please email us at cdsweekly@cds-sf.org and give us your email address. 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



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7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

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Friday, February 6th

Reenrollment contracts mailed to all families.

Friday, February 13th

Reenrollment contracts due.

Monday, February 9th

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

State of the School Night, Part II

Location TBA

How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.

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



