



January 27, 2005

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Making Them Strong

A parent of a sixth grader stopped me in the hallway yesterday just after school to say that her child was marked tardy. "But we got here early this morning because I had to take care of some business upstairs." She was not being accusatory or defensive. Nonetheless—being the obnoxiously persistent educator—I reminded her that this was an opportunity to be the coach rather than the manager. "It will be a good thing to talk with her about. Remember to ask yourself: Whose problem is it? At this age you want her to take responsibility for getting to class on time once you have done your part of getting her to school on time."

One of my colleagues in the East Bay likes to say, when talking to young adolescents, "Fire your mom as a manager and rehire her as a consultant." It is an important reminder to parents, even before their children reach adolescence. It helps us keep our eye on the right ball: we are trying to raise independent people, people who can do it on their own, who take responsibility for creating lives they want to live.

When our children are new, we try to mold family life, including child behavior, into the way we want it. By the time our children enter kindergarten, we have done so much training that children are hard-wired with our values: be careful crossing streets, be nice to your little sister, be gentle with the dog, go to bed at a reasonable time, don't bother me while I am cooking—you could make a list of a hundred messages you have been trying to get across. Before age five, children really want to know what the formula for success is and they are sponging it up from us. They copy, practice and test reality to identify what's real.

By the time they are five or so, a change has occurred and it is time for us to shift gears. If they are not doing what we want them to do, it is not because they don't know we want it—it is something else. Maybe they want to see if we really mean it. Maybe they want to see if other things work, too. Maybe they have trouble doing it or need practice or reminding. Maybe they want to check out for themselves whether it's really true. The more truths they find out for themselves, the better off they will be.

My thirteen-year-old stepdaughter told me last year that when she was in kindergarten she learned that she didn't have to do what she was told. "I remember the moment. My dad told me to wash my hands. So there I am in the bathroom, and he isn't around, and I'm like, 'What if I don't do it?'" She is by no means a disobedient child. In fact she is quite willing most of the time to go along with what her parents want her to do. More importantly, she has internalized most of those messages as good for her. She is very smart, thinks

Hot Dates

Friday, January 28

10:15-10:30 a.m.

Friday Assembly

Second Grade Presenting

Tuesday, February 1

4:30-5:45 p.m.

PTTA Meeting

Faculty Lounge

Monday, February 7

6:30-8:30 p.m.

State of the School Night, Part II

Notre Dame Plaza common room



Thank You!

- To the Tadpole class for providing a delicious faculty appreciation breakfast.
- To Laura Pliska, Tina Corse, Elizabeth Seirmarco and Susan Chastain for helping out with our preschool admission visits.
- To Ted Arleo and Michelle Kriebel for designing our new “Who’s Who at CDS” poster hanging in the front hallway of the school, and to Mark Towery for printing it out for us in full color.
- To Melissa Dubose for donating bark and plants to the entryway garden and for continuing to donate time and energy to the project.
- To all families in the 2nd and 3rd grade classes for your unanimous participation in the annual fund. Way to go generous parents!
- To Tacy Gaede for donating an office chair for the third floor.
- To Sanlin Cory for donating computer equipment to the middle school and farm and garden program.

for herself and it’s obvious from the way she talks that most of the things her parents want for her are what she now wants—about 90%. That’s pretty good when you consider that what her parents want is probably only about 90% accurate anyway.

When I told her I was writing about this subject she added more to her anecdote. “After kindergarten, if kids aren’t doing what they’re supposed to be doing, parents need to make it clear what’s in it for their kid, or what bad thing will happen if they don’t. And you know what else? If parents are not getting the behavior they want by the time their kid is in seventh grade it’s too late. You can’t make ‘em after seventh grade. Anything they would try now is just too little too late.” At this point she quoted another teenager who had recently been grounded for failing to take out the garbage; “You know, they can take away my communication, but they can’t take away my apathy.”

Regardless of how typical my stepdaughter is, it’s good for us to take heed. The elementary years are good ones for us to encourage our children to take on higher and higher levels of responsibility; for themselves, their work, their

family, their community and their environment. The more of this that is internalized by the time they are in seventh grade, the easier it will be for us to be rehired as consultants.

In the December 2004 issue of *Psychology Today* is an important article—required reading for all CDS adults—entitled, “A Nation of Wimps” by Hara Estroff Marano. American parents are increasingly anxious about their children’s success and in this anxiety they seem to be acting according to the theory that “nothing succeeds like success.” Therefore, the parent who cares will hover, over-plan, over-program, over-protect and act so as to engineer their child’s success. The author cites a great deal of research that demonstrates the disastrous fallacy of this approach. The article gives us our reading list: David Elkind, Elise Kramer, David Anderegg, Barbara Carlson and Jerome Kagan.

The truth is that nothing succeeds like taking responsibility. Failure is at least as powerful an educator as success. Another East Bay professional, Sheri Glucoft Wong, is famous for saying, “Strengthen the child’s disappointment muscle.”

I know I was probably obnoxious to the caring mother who spoke to me yesterday morning, so let me apologize publicly, but let me also take this opportunity to remind all of us that the sixth grader who wants to have a perfect record of attendance has a great learning opportunity. What is important at this age is not that she achieves a perfect record, but that she learns from the challenges of trying to achieve a perfect record.

The Dirt

Cob Benches

One of the cob benches in the garden is now missing its back. Two big chunks collapsed during the rainstorms and last week Luke, Nick, Isabel, Eddie and Zoe finished what the rain started. (The fourth and fifth graders had a fabulous time pushing the remains of the back off the bench.) It has been interesting watching the cob benches crumble apart and return to the earth. If you come out to the garden, in addition to seeing the benches break apart, you will also notice moss and seedlings growing on them. In their demise the benches look quite beautiful and belong in the garden more than ever before as seeds take root in them and turn them into soil.

From the Office

State of the School Night

State of the School night, part two, is quickly approaching. Please join us on Monday, February 7 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Notre Dame Plaza common room for discussion of CDS finances and strategic planning. Pizza and beverages will be provided.

Mission Statement Feedback

Thank you to those of you who have commented on the draft mission statement attached to the *Weekly* earlier this month. We are hoping to receive more feedback from parents, teachers and other community members by the start of next week so that the Strategic Planning Steering Committee can, with input from the Board, revise the statement to reflect community input. Please take a moment to read the one-page attachment containing draft statements of CDS mission and values and email your comments to cdsms@cds-sf.org by this Monday, January 31. Thank you for your time and thoughts.

Peanut Allergies

Parents, please remember that the school maintains a "No Peanut" policy. There are several students with serious peanut allergies and no student should bring any food product to school that contains peanuts or peanut butter. Thank you for continuing to honor this policy that keeps our students safe and healthy.

Lost & Found

Please remember to come and grab your lost and found items this Thursday and Friday. All items will be displayed on the school gates and will be taken to Community Thrift immediately following the end of the school day on Friday, January 28.

Events

Spring Celebration & Auction

Saturday March 19, 2005

6 p.m.-midnight

Auction donations are due February 11, 2005. Here is a list of potential ideas to get you thinking about what you or your family may want to donate. Please remember that any donations involving season tickets or vacation homes can be tailored to meet times that are most

convenient for you.

- Donate theater or concert tickets - San Francisco or Broadway.
- Ask a friend or relative to suggest some dates that would be convenient for them to donate time at their family vacation home - San Diego, New York, Los Angeles, Lake Tahoe or the Riviera!!!
- Sitting on a stack of frequent flyer miles? Donate 25,000 miles for a domestic flight or 50,000 miles for an international flight.
- Part with your season tickets for one night- opera or sporting event.
- Host a theme party at your home, cook an authentic dinner from your home country or let us sample your delicious culinary techniques.
- Take a group hiking to your favorite spot at Mount Tamalpais.
- Create a gourmet picnic basket.

All donation forms are due February 11, 2005. Contact us if you need ideas or help:

Tina Corse, tjcorse@comcast.net

Emma Donovan, ed@globeconsultants.com

Extended Program News

Summer Camp

It may seem too early, but summer is just around the corner. Summer camp packets for 2005 will be sent home with the *Weekly* today. Highlights include theme camps for preschool, kindergarten, elementary and

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Calendar

Saturday, January 29, Girls, 11 a.m., Boys, 12 p.m.
French American School, 150 Oak Street

Monday, January 31, Boys, 3:45 p.m.
San Francisco School, 300 Gaven Street

Please continue to come out and support the Bulldog basketball teams. The players and coaches appreciate your support and team spirit!

middle school camps. Also, there is a new Youth Leadership Camp open to students entering grades 6-8 in fall 2005. Please call Jenna at x15 if you do not receive a packet. Extra copies can be sent home upon request.

February Vacation Camp

Registration packets were sent home last week. If you are interested in signing your child up for our February 22-25 Camp, please return your form as soon as possible. The theme for the week is "Our Neighborhood" and includes fun projects and field trips every day! Teachers include Josh, Gladys, Gloria, Ngoc and Adi.

Holy Family Day Home

Starting this month, students from CDS will have the opportunity to be guest presenters at Holy Family Day Home's preschool classes and read to them from a storybook of their choosing. Please note that students who participate will not be charged for after care. Many families called me to express interest in having their 4th-7th graders participate, but only two families have turned in their registration forms. If you are interested, please call Jenna at x15 ASAP.

Upcoming PM Field Trips

Friday, January 28: Preschool trip to visit Mission Dolores, 3-4 p.m. (Parent volunteers needed!)

Friday, January 28: 4-7th graders, Dolores Park, 3:30-5 p.m.

Friday, January 28: 2nd graders, Dolores Park, 3:30-5 p.m.

Library Corner

Look, We're Online!

Did you know you can view the CDS library catalog online? Since the book fair, hundreds of titles have been added to the collection. See what we've acquired by going to <http://library.cds-sf.org/webopac/main> where you can search by title, author, subject and other fields. The address is also accessible through the "academics"

portion of the CDS web site, www.cds-sf.org/academics/library.html.

New Volunteers

A number of new recruits have signed up to become volunteer librarians. A big welcome to parents Patti Cazzato, Donna DeMatteo, Laura Dyball, Leslie Edelman, Kate Flynn Becker, Suzanne Jachinowski, Regina Marler, Robin McClarren, Durga Sreenivasan and grandparent Ed Pliska.

Tale of a Lost Book

Once upon a time, *Elliot Fry's Good-Bye* was checked out by a 1st grader. The book did not come back to the library and overdue notices were sent home. To avoid the \$20 fine assessed on books that are overdue for four weeks, the girl's diligent mother helped ferry the book back to the library – the public library. From there it made its way to our friends at San Francisco Day School and it will travel home soon. Please remember to return your CDS books to CDS! Thank you for your continued support.

Hot On the Shelves

The Newbery Medal is awarded annually by the American Library Association for the most distinguished

PTTA Corner

Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8:30-9 a.m. This is your chance to meet other families, have a few minutes of grown-up conversation and grab sustenance and caffeine before you start your day.

In addition, we need volunteers on occasion to help set up and bring doughnuts. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board. Nothing gets the kids out of bed in the morning like the knowledge that they will stop off for doughnuts during the drive to school!

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

Contact Marianne Evans, PTTA President, at (415) 648-1731 or goevansgo@yahoo.com.

American children's book published the previous year. Check out a few of the Newbery-winning fiction titles owned by the CDS library:

Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko

A 12-year-old boy moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo

The adventures of Despereaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess he loves, the servant girl who longs to be a princess and a devious rat determined to bring them all to ruin.

An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 by Jim Murphy

An account of the yellow fever epidemic that swept through Philadelphia in 1793.

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site.

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park

Tree-ear, a 13-year-old orphan in medieval Korea, lives under a bridge near a potters' village and longs to learn how to throw the delicate celadon ceramics himself.

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni describes her first summer in the town of Naomi, Florida, and all the good things that happen to her because of her big ugly dog, Winn-Dixie.

PTTA Update

Greetings

March, the time of year when we start welcoming new families to CDS, is fast approaching. The PTTA would like to spend some time with our current parents examining the ways in which we welcome new families to our community. We are hoping for your help. If you are interested in brainstorming with us and/or would like have a role in the welcoming process, please join us Tuesday, February 1, from 4:30-5:45 p.m. in the faculty lounge for a brainstorming session. As always, childcare is free if you sign up at the front desk by 10 a.m. the day of the meeting.

If you can't make the meeting but would like to be

involved in this process, or if you have ideas on how we can improve in this area, please don't hesitate to contact me, one of the other PTTA officers or your classroom liaison (call, e-mail or flag us down at drop-off/pick-up or coffee in the yard!) It would be great to hear from parents with children in each of the grades, from preschool to middle school.

— Marianne Evans, PTTA President

Hola Familias de CDS

Hola a todas las familias de CDS!

The kindergarten students are studying new words such as *grande* (big) and *muchas gracias* (thank you very much).

1st graders are looking at the letter S and words such as *sapo* (frog).

2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are continuing to study the verb *poder* (I can) and are looking at ways to show what they can and cannot do. They are also learning to understand commands (the imperative form) using total physical response techniques.

With Ms. Geddes, 6th and 7th graders are learning the preterite (past tense) and will also be learning the imperfect tenses. This will help them to discuss things they did in the recent and not so recent past.

With Ms. Gladys, they are studying verbs in the present tense such as *hablar* (to speak).

La frase de la semana. The phrase of the week.

Que hiciste ayer? What did you do yesterday?

— Spanish Department

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, February 10

Parent/teacher conferences

No school

No extended program

Friday, February 11

Parent/teacher conferences

No school

No extended program

Friday, February 11

Reenrollment contracts mailed

Friday, February 18

Reenrollment contracts due

with 10% deposit

Saturday, March 19

6:30 p.m.-12:00 a.m.

Spring Celebration & Auction

Children's Day School

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Submissions due Wednesdays 8 a m

