



October 28, 2004

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Head's Column

The Art of Raising Successful Children

Surrounding one of Elizabeth McClellan's drawings now on display on the third floor gallery wall are the following words:

While taking my dog for a walk I carefully look at the ground. Mostly this is an effort to not step in dog poop (not my dog's, but some other dog's poop that its person didn't remove). This time scanning the ground I found the skeletal remains of a baby bird. I looked at it for a long time – the short wings signifying that this baby never was ready to leave the nest. I found a piece of paper and scooped it up.

When I returned home I took the bird out and drew it. While I'm drawing I'm wondering why? Why am I putting off urgent tasks for today so that I can investigate this little flat bird? (I start to look at the color of the bird against the shadow it cast and even think about painting it.) Why do I like these things? I don't feel like someone with 'morbid curiosity' but that does define this activity. I think instead, it's something about being able to see a creature up close. The perfection of features, alive or dead is beauty; it moves me. It's my personal understanding – the act of drawing a thing – is a way of looking at the structure of this object – observing how light defines the form and also I'm thinking about all the potential of this creature – what it could've been. I guess this was his destiny... and maybe mine, too.

Spiraling around the drawing of a dead baby bird, Elizabeth's meditation takes us deeper and deeper from dog poop to destiny.

Once we have kids, we hardly look up until the last one goes off to college. We move from waking up to breakfast to drop-off to pick-up to dinner to homework to bed. Staying alive keeps us focused on food, shelter and care of the young. And even when the present seems secure enough, parental love shifts to trying to secure the future. There is a science to raising children; there are better ways and worse ways, and parents want to know about it. Some of the principles of that science came out on Parent Education Night. Fifty or sixty parents came to school on a Thursday evening in October to learn, "What CDS Teachers Know That Parents Can Use At Home."

To use our affluence to raise a generation of people who will be better people in the world is a worthy act. In my lifetime parents have become better at raising children to be caring, thoughtful decision-makers for a fast-moving, changing, and increasingly diverse society. However halting and imperfect our efforts, we are getting better at being good partners, parents and responsible citizens. I also see this evidenced in our world. Racism and sexism continue to be part of human behavior, but people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anita Hill have caused watershed moments in our society. Perhaps history will show that Gavin Newsom caused a watershed moment this year when he began handing out marriage licenses to gay couples. Social irresponsibility still

Hot Dates

Friday, October 29

11:15 a.m.
Halloween Celebration
Noon Dismissal
No Extended Program

Sunday, October 31

Daylight Savings Ends

Monday, November 1

Professional Day
No School
No Extended Program

Tuesday, November 2

Election Day



Thank You!

- To all of the generous parents who have provided Friday morning coffee and doughnuts in the yard: Bill Littmann, Michael Silver, Adam Feuerstein, Tanya Beck, Atri Chatterjee and Candy Mabry.
- To the third grade parents for providing a fabulous Friday morning faculty breakfast.
- To Patricia Ruppert for contributing a great idea, long arms and ladder-climbing skills to the annual fund palm tree in the driveway.
- To Kathryn Selleck for taking 1/2 of the sixth grade class on our taxonomic tour of the Golden Gate Arboretum.
- To Kit Land for catering a beautiful, delicious breakfast for San Francisco educators on Wednesday morning.
- To Karen Randig and Marie Cross for helping with admission tours during the past week.
- To Andrea Streepey, grandmother of Fazion and Deseaus LaMarque, for donating plants to the garden.

abounds, but I have seen young people go out into the workforce and make a difference before they are even out of their twenties. I have seen them make changes in their high schools! When I witness the kind of thoughtful, responsible, respectful behavior that CDS children exhibit, I know we are moving toward a better world.

Learning the science of raising successful children, however, is important but not sufficient. Elizabeth's work reminds us that there is an art to it. A parent who spoke to me after the event reminded me that adults cause bad behavior in children. When we are out of sorts, or frustrated, or tired, what we know about setting limits, using logical consequences and inclusive language goes out the window. I was reminded that we cannot pursue the science without practicing the art. To get better at "staying alive," we have to get deeper into life and getting deeper into life is about confronting the inevitability of poop, snot, sickness, disappointment, struggle, loss and death gracefully. We cannot get higher without getting deeper.

One of the liberating things about helping children grow is that they have not yet become entrenched in the

dichotomies between life and death, better and worse, progress and regression. We can learn from them. Their art, their writing, their creations and their relationships are messy efforts to bring into being a vision of something. Their lives in school and at home are full of mistakes, conflicts, loss, struggle and disappointments. They actually can learn to thrive on surprises. When they see a hawk kill a pigeon or a wasp eat an ant they are more intrigued than appalled.

Recently, as the third graders studied ants, they viewed them progressively from the least powerful microscopes to the most powerful ones. They got deeper and deeper into the structure of an ant and discovered that what looked like one species was really several different species of ant; some are hairy, some are smooth; some are darker and some are lighter. A few of the ants died in the process even though they took care for this not to happen. As some ants wriggled and quivered, the students lived in the tension between life and death.

As we keep fast-paced lives, moving from one good thing to the next, trying to avoid the dog poop, we need to build into our lives the time to stop, look honestly at what is around us and inside us, metabolize the negative into our system and come out with a fuller, if sadder or deeper, understanding of the life we are living. Eighteenth century scientists, who lived closer to death than we do today, drew the objects of their study just as Elizabeth drew her dead bird. For fully functioning brains, art and science need to work together. The science of raising strong, successful children is facilitated by adults who take the time to study the actual facts of their lives. This, interestingly enough, is an art.

The Dirt

Captivating Critters

The Leaping Lizards put in their beneficial bug garden last week. When we removed the hybrid squash that was growing in their garden bed we went from being gardeners to being entomologists in the blink of an eye. The preschoolers became immediately fascinated with the snails, spiders, roly-polies, ants and worms that were covering the soil like a carpet. Zelda was particularly interested in the creepy crawlies and wanted to hold them all. At one point I looked at Zelda and noticed that she was very gently and carefully holding a snail, a roly-poly and an enormous worm all at the same time. She was captivated by the critters and spent most of her time in the garden observing them. One of the joys of working in the garden with children is that I never really

know what we are going to focus on because nature so frequently determines that for us.

— Misty, Environmental Education Resource Teacher

From the Office

Annual Fund

A huge, heartfelt, palm tree-sized thank you to parents – both callers and answerers – for making last week's phonathon both successful and fun. Our annual fund palm tree in the driveway is already (and very happily) out of date – parents have now contributed over \$72,000 to the 2004-05 Annual Fund and are making speedy progress toward the parent goal of \$105,000. 56% of parents have made a pledge or donation to the Annual Fund so far, and the third grade class is currently leading the school in parent participation at 78%, with the sixth grade challenging for the coveted title of First Class to Reach 100% Participation at 73%. Kid Chow lunch for a day will be on the house for the first 100% participation class.

We enthusiastically invite all parents to participate in this campaign by contributing what you can. Giving to the Annual Fund will allow CDS to continue to be a leader in sliding scale tuition and will support your children's teachers and favorite programs including art, music and the farm and garden. If you have any questions, would like to make a pledge or enjoy climbing palm trees while armed with a staple gun and yards of plastic tablecloths, please contact Marion Quinones at 861-5432 x23 or marionq@cds-sf.org. Thank you for your enthusiasm and generosity.

Student Pictures

Picture day proofs have been sent home with children. The orders are due back on November 3 and retakes will be held on Tuesday, November 16. Photographs will begin at 9 a.m.

Lost and Found

On the last Thursday and Friday of each month the lost and found items will be displayed in the drop-off and pick-up area. Anything unclaimed by Friday afternoon will be donated to Community Thrift!

Events

Haunted House Today

Please come visit the after school program's spooky haunted house today! Festivities begin at 3:30 p.m. in the third floor art studio.

Halloween Celebration

Don't miss our annual Halloween celebration, held on Friday, October 29! All parents are invited to attend the Elementary and Middle School Parade, which promises to be spectacular and scary. The parade begins in the yard at 11:15 a.m. Please check with your child's teacher regarding the schedule for the day. If you plan to come for the parade, we encourage you to consider public transportation or leave yourself plenty of time to park on the street. Please note that dismissal will be at noon and there will be no extended program.

Extended Program News

Adult Enrichment Classes

THE SIGN UP DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29TH. This is an exciting new extended program for ADULTS. Classes offered are: Writing Memoirs, Thursdays with Andre Perry; Hatha Yoga, Tuesdays with Carrie Birgbauer; Beginning Spanish, Tuesdays with Consuelo Aparicio-Cercos; Introduction to Painting, Thursdays with Karen Slovak. On-site childcare is available. These classes are open to CDS staff, parents, Notre Dame residents and friends in the community. Please help spread the word and take advantage of this great opportunity to get to meet new people and learn something new and exciting. Contact Jenna at x15 to sign up. Classes begin November 2.

Go Bulldogs!

Come out and support the CDS volleyball team in their last regular season game. If they win this week, they are off to the play-offs!

Co-ed Volleyball Calendar

Tuesday, November 2, 3:45 p.m.

San Francisco Christian School

5500 Mission St, Daly City.

New Community Partnership

The after school program is embarking on a partnership with Holy Family Day Home, located on the corner of 16th and Dolores streets. Once a week, teams of upper elementary and middle school students from CDS will go there to read stories to their preschool-K groups. Their informative website highlights their extensive commitment to diversity and accessibility: www.holyfamilydayhome.org.

Where is your Child?

After school elementary and middle school teachers are conducting many exciting projects in the afternoons this year. At times they may need to use the kitchen, the third floor art studio or join up with another class in a room different from the one they are usually in. When you come to pick up your child at the end of the day, please assume they are in the yard or in their day classroom, unless there is a note posted above the sign-out desk saying otherwise. All after school teachers will be posting a sign when their activities take them to a different school location. Thanks for your patience while we work out the details on this, and know that your children are being engaged in great activities!

PTTA Update

Auction Kick-Off Meeting

Arrangements are underway for the CDS event of the year and you're invited to help organize! The Spring Celebration and Auction kick-off meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 3 at 4:15 p.m. in the faculty lounge. Last year the event proved to be a huge fundraiser and great fun! We're starting to organize earlier this year in the hope that the event will be even bigger and better.

We will provide more information about the event, what's been arranged so far and the volunteer opportunities available to you.

Please try to attend. We look forward to seeing you all on November 3.

Save the Date

Our next PTTA meeting will be Tuesday, November 9 in the faculty lounge from 4:30-5:45 p.m. Highlights include a demonstration by CDS faculty members on how math is taught at CDS. As always, we will provide snacks, beverages and an opportunity to join other parents, faculty and members of the administration to share ideas, thoughts and questions. Childcare for CDS students is free if you sign-up at the front desk by 10:00 a.m. the day of the meeting. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

PTTA Corner

Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8:30-9:00 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.

Hola Familias de CDS

This week the Kindergarten students have been learning Spanish words for animals, fruit, colors and the numbers 1-40. First graders have been studying new words, numbers and songs. Second grade students are creating an *Esqueleto* for their classroom project and for the *Dia de los Muertos* celebration. Third graders are composing sentences with a combination of basic vocabulary, the verb “to be” and opposites. Fourth and fifth graders are working with opposites as well. Sixth and seventh graders are asking questions and engaging in new dialogue. Don’t forget to check out the middle school work on *The Art of Translation* in the Spanish bulletin board on the second floor outside the first grade classroom.

Students will be attending the *Dia de los Muertos* tour at the Mission Cultural Center in November. Please contact Consuelo at x19 if you would like to help with the trips.

2nd grade: Friday, November 5, 1:00 p.m.

3rd grade: Wednesday, November 3, 1:00 p.m.

4th and 5th grade: Wednesday, November 3, 1:30 p.m.

6th and 7th grade: Wednesday, November 3, 12:30 p.m.

La frase de la semana:

En el Dia de los muertos recordamos a nuestros seres queridos que murieron.

During the day of the death we remember the ones we loved and have passed on.

Parents, please remember to practice speaking Spanish with your children at home!

— Spanish Department

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, November 9,
Middle School Class Observations
9 a.m.

Language Arts with Mr. Andre
1 p.m.

Science with Mr. Doug

Tuesday, November 9th

4:30-5:45 p.m.

PTTA Meeting

Faculty Lounge

Wednesday, November 10
Middle School Class Observation
9 a.m.

7th Grade Math with Mr. Doug

Friday, November 12

8:45-10:15 a.m.

K-7 Tour

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