



December 16, 2004

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### When It Gets Dark the Stars Come Out

It's hard to believe that the shortest day and the longest night of the year are only five days away. It seems to me that things only just started to get dark. This time of year people can get down, but this time of year is also good breeding ground for hope. When things are dark it's important to believe that things will get better, and this faith is hard when much evidence is to the contrary. What I like about this time of year is that I am reminded that my hope and wish for the return of the sun is founded on a certainty.

Bolstered by this certainty I am fortified enough to enjoy the darkness itself. In California, of course, that is easy enough. From the perspective of a New England Yankee, December is a wonderful time of year. The soft sun often makes itself felt. At school, moreover, the students shine with brilliance.

Last week in the middle of a finance committee meeting I heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," I said, and there in the doorway was Kwesi, a second grader. With no apparent embarrassment associated with her surprise at having interrupted a meeting of large people, she said: "Excuse me, Mr. Rick, I would like to make a proposal."

"Fine Kwesi, what is your proposal?"

"I would like to teach an elective."

"Wonderful. What would you like to teach?"

"Sewing."

"That's great. I'm in a meeting and can't talk now, but could you meet me at the end of the day to talk about this?"

"Yes."

"Three o'clock?"

"Yes. Three o'clock."

At three o'clock, Kwesi met with Ms. Elizabeth and me to discuss her proposal. She indeed had a proposal—five pages—everything all laid out: schedule of lessons, cost, age range of students, maximum and minimum enrollment. Her mother joined us because she had come to pick Kwesi up, but it was clearly Kwesi's project. It occurred to me that Kwesi had done the same thing we were doing in the finance committee meeting, only on a smaller scale.

It's not just Kwesi, though. Brilliance is breaking out everywhere from pre-school through seventh grade. All of Kwesi's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classmates shone Monday night as they presented their "Bones Project" to their parents. One evening last week the fourth, fifth and sixth graders presented the writing from their buddy project with confidence, eloquence and pride. The quality of the

### Hot Dates

**Friday, December 17**

11 a.m.

Winter Performance

Boys and Girls Club gymnasium

**Friday, December 17**

Noon Dismissal

No Extended Program

**December 20 – December 24**

Holiday Vacation

No School

No Camp

**December 27 – December 31**

Holiday Vacation

No School

Vacation Camp offered



## Thank You!

- To 4/5th grade parents for all of the help and assistance you have given so far this year. We especially want to thank Ila Motawala for bringing in the lovely Indian dresses and costumes for our play and teaching us how to write in Hindi; Lisa Morello and Lisa Eltinge for the gift of food for Story Night; Steve Miller, Kristen Wurz, Mary Fernald, Karolina Garrett, Donna DeMateo, Amit Motawala, Tacy Gaede, Melanie Fife and Nasrin Naraghi for coming with us to the Asian Arts Museum to help us discuss and explore Indian Art; Tina Smith, Mary Fernald, Yulin Saussy, Jackie Haslam, Lisa Morello, Kristen Wurz and Barbara Nicol for supplying dinners for Eddie and family; Jennifer Durand for teaching us yoga; and Tacy Gaede for her e-mailing help and for Eddie's lunches.
- To everyone who ordered gift wrap and greens this year., and especially Tina Corse and Emma Donovan for coordinating the sale of the gift wrap and greens. We had a record amount of orders, which means we will be able to give the teachers a very merry Christmas bonus! We would especially like to thank Kim Tennis, Jeanneth Gutierrez and Jane Seabrook.
- To Ava Burton's family for donating dictionaries to the third grade class.
- To Karen Randig, Bill Littmann and Marie Cross for helping out with admission tours last week.
- To Danielle Conrad and Hemant Shah for donating laptop bags to the Science Center.
- To all of the parents who have been organizing this evening's faculty/staff holiday party: Jane Seabrook for hosting at the Lone Palm; Marianne Evans, Georgia McNamara, Laura Pliska and Amanda Richard for coordinating parent efforts; Luma Dahlbacka for designing palm tree-themed invitations; Robin McClarren for creating the sign for the front door of the venue; Nancy Myers for volunteer bartending services; and the entire Kindergarten and Starfish classes for supplying the food. Thanks to all the parent volunteers who will be helping at the Lone Palm tonight. We are looking forward to a festive night!
- To the Leaping Lizard class for providing a delicious staff breakfast last week.

sounds from the music room next door to my office is building to a crescendo, too. We'll all get to see the finished product tomorrow at the winter performance.

This time of year adults have a tendency to get more intense and anxious. I don't really know why, but one of the blessings of working at the Children's Day School is the daily reminder that when it gets dark, the stars come out. It makes it easier to believe (or not care) that in less than a week the days will be getting longer again.

## The Dirt

### Salamander Fans

Vivien, Mikaela, Daniel and Cash (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders) spent their time in the garden last week building habitats for the salamanders who live in the garden. Our inspiration came from observing a salamander under a rock that is tucked away in a bunch of overgrowing Mexican sage (known to the children as honey suckle) that creates a moist and sheltered environment. Vivien, Mikaela, Daniel and Cash were very excited to see and touch (after getting their hands wet) the salamander. They worked together to dig up rocks that were randomly placed in the garden and move them to locations that had overgrown plants where salamanders would be more likely to establish a homestead. Hopefully this will help to establish a larger population of salamanders living in the garden for the children to observe. The students' process working together to build salamander habitats reminded me of a wonderful children's story about the relationship between a young boy and a salamander that is beautifully illustrated called *The Salamander Room*. If there is a salamander fan in your family be sure to read the book and come check out a salamander in the garden!

## From the Office

### Annual Fund Update

Great news! We reached \$100,000 in parent donations to the Annual Fund last week, and there is still time this year to make a tax-deductible gift to help us reach (or, even better, exceed) the parent goal of \$105,000. Thank you to all who have participated in this campaign by volunteering, giving and encouraging others to give. An impressive 78% of parents have contributed already, compared to 74% of parents who made a gift by the end of the last school year. Together with trustees, teachers, staff, friends and grandparents (who will receive a letter from Rick this week inviting them to

participate in the Annual Fund), we have raised \$212,000 toward the total goal of \$335,000. This is an impressive accomplishment, and reflects the hard work, generosity and enthusiasm of many, and all of us are grateful for the support.

Regarding campaign logistics: pledges to the Annual Fund can be paid any time until June 30, 2005, but we will wrap up the parent solicitation phase of the campaign by mid-January. (No class has yet claimed the Kid Chow-for-a-day 100% participation incentive, but the Kindergarten, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 6th grade classes all have over 80% participation and bragging rights are still very much up in the air.) If you haven't yet pledged, please consider making a gift to CDS this holiday season that is not made of plastic, does not require parental assembly or 8 AA batteries, will last a lifetime and can be taken as a deduction on your tax return. If you have any questions, please contact Marion Quinones at x23 or marionq@cds-sf.org.

## Friday's Noon Dismissal

Tomorrow, Friday, December 17, we will have a noon dismissal following the winter performance at the Boys and Girls Club. Students will walk back to CDS with their respective classes after the performance. Parents, please return to CDS and pick your child up and sign them out in their classrooms.

## Faculty Art Wall

Have you checked out the Faculty Art Wall? Faculty and staff are putting their artwork on the wall outside the art studio on the 3rd floor. Come take a look to see what talent teachers and administrators have outside of CDS. This month's exhibit is twofold. I'm showing my photographs from India while I lived abroad in Asia. The 4th/5th graders decided that this was a perfect opportunity for collaboration. Yesterday, I shared my stories and photographs on India with the class, then the 4th/5th graders spent the rest of the time writing stories in response to the photographs. Their stories will be posted next to each photograph on the faculty art wall this week and will be up through the beginning of January. Later in January, we plan to have a reception at a neighborhood café for the 4th/5th graders and their families to read their stories and show the photographs. Stay tuned for more collaborative art info.

-Ms. Amanda, Assistant to Head/Technology Associate

## Need a Tutor?

Carrie Birgbauer, First Grade Head Teacher, is available to tutor K-7th grade kids in reading, writing and math. Please contact her at carrieb@cds-sf.org. Carrie has a K-8 Multiple Subject Credential and can tutor at school and/or in your home.

## Events

### Winter Performance

Come one, come all, to our winter performance! "Tell Me a Story...Cuenta Cuentos," is the tale of four children who accidentally get locked in the library only to discover the world of magic that happens once the winged book elves come out for the night and all the books come to life! Our annual show will take place this Friday at 11 a.m. at the Boys and Girls Club. Please join us for a festive celebration.

## Extended Program News

### Winter Vacation Camp

There are still openings for both preschool and upper grades. If you are interested in signing up, please fill out a registration form by Friday at noon. Extra forms are available at Rose's desk.

### Winter Enrichment Classes

Registration packets have been sent home with students today. If you don't find one in your child's backpack, please stop by Friday morning and pick one up! There is an exciting array of choices, including FIFTEEN completely new course offerings. Classes start the week of Monday, January 10. The sign-up deadline is Thursday, January 6 at noon!

## Go Bulldogs!

The Bulldogs took on the CDS faculty and staff in a rousing game of volleyball in the yard on Monday, December 13. Both teams played hard and the end results favored the teachers and staff. Highlights included lots of spiking, cheering and pizza. Stay tuned for basketball updates after winter break.

## Upcoming Celebration/March

Josh Connor and Michael Gast would like families to join them for a city-wide parade and march in celebration of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Many Bay Area school students will be participating in this annual event. Interested students and parents are welcome to meet at CDS on Monday, January 17 to join in the festivities. The time is TBD. Please RSVP by contacting Jenna Stephens at x15 as soon as possible. Also, check out: <http://www.norcalmlk.org/2005/> for more information.

## Library Corner

### Book Fairs Exceed Expectations

This year's dual events to support our growing library – "Buy a Book, Build a Library" – were successful by nearly any measure, thanks to the participation of an impressive number of parents and CDS staff. The evening fundraiser at A Clean Well Lighted Place for Books, which included mingling and munching, in addition to gift-buying, brought in over \$1,100 for the library fund. That same week, people came in droves to purchase or "adopt" \$4,647 worth of books for the library – nearly 300 new titles – and were able to see the amazing library we are all helping to build for the school. The students are noticing the difference, too; when they come in for their library periods, they are finding the shelves stuffed with new book choices, from fiction to history, biography, folklore, poetry and science. Thank you again to everyone who volunteered and supported these important events.

### Volunteer Librarians Needed

Many of the class library times are in need of volunteers to serve as librarians. In fact, some weekly library periods cannot continue to happen without your participation. The greatest needs are in the kindergarten, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grades, where volunteers are needed to fill regular shifts. Simple training on the library software is required. This is enjoyable, rewarding work. If interested, email [library@cds-sf.org](mailto:library@cds-sf.org) with your availability. Weekly library periods are as follows:

- Preschool: Fridays, 9-10 (reading)
- Kindergarten: Mondays, 12:30-1:30

- 1<sup>st</sup> grade: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Thursdays, 9-10
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: Fridays, 9:30-10:15
- 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade: Wednesdays, 9-10
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Mondays, 11:30-12 & Thursdays, 12:45-1:15
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: Mondays, 2:30-3

There are of course, many other ways to volunteer. Some parents come in occasionally to shelve, process or cover books. Others work on displays. Email the library if you want to get involved, or come on in and say hello. If no one is there, leave a note on the clipboard (near the printer) and someone will contact you.

Finally, because of the many generous donations and new books we have received this year, we would like to encourage those wishing to support the library to give their time rather than their books right now. Though we appreciate the thought behind book donations, our greatest need is for volunteers to help staff the library and process and shelve our expanded collection. Thank you for your help.

## Hola Familias de CDS

Hola a todas las familias de cds!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade has been learning about the contents of their backpacks. They made paper backpacks and cut out various items and then presented the items in Spanish.

The elementary and middle school students have been writing poetry based on a set of 'I' statements. Next week the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders are going to create math problems for the kindergarten students to use and the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders are going to create math problems using clothing and shopping vocabulary. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be looking at holiday traditions.

Have a good holiday!

*La frase de la semana:*

*Esta es mi familia.* This is my family.

— Spanish Department

## Upcoming Dates

**January 3**  
Classes Resume

**January 6**  
Deadline to Register for Winter Electives

**January 10**  
Winter Electives begin

**January 17**  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
No School  
No Extended Program

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