



January 19, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Being the Best in a Flat World

One email I received in response to an earlier *Weekly* read, "Thank you for tipping me off to *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman. It's a great book and I liked your essay, but I think what it means for us is that our kids must be the best. They are now competing, not just with American kids but with kids all over the world. They have to be at the top, or they will be nowhere."

My sense is that today this sentiment is widely shared among American families, at least private school American families. During the thirty years I have been running schools, the anxiety has been building with no sign of let-up. With the rise of meritocracy there is a concomitant rise in the vague sense that the cultural origin and social and economic standing of the parents is increasingly irrelevant to success. Our children are going to have to stand on their own merits. This has made parents increasingly intense about the quality of their children's education.

This anxiety has been an increasing source of frustration for educators I have known. It has presented a challenge to the teachers in my schools, and is the top topic of conversation among my colleagues at other independent schools from coast to coast. The anxiety manifests itself in a number of ways which we know are dysfunctional—dysfunctional in the sense that they do not serve our agreed upon ends of educating our children to be successful in a rapidly changing, increasingly diverse and competitive world. Anxiety results in excessive focus on the results of standardized tests, increased pressure on children at home and in school to measure up, competition among students, increased cheating, grade inflation and other erosion of integrity in the daily life and culture of schools. There are many other manifestations of this anxiety, many of which I write about in the *CDS Weekly*. All of them are counter-productive.

It's not that there is nothing to be anxious about. As my father used to say: "If you're not anxious, you don't understand the situation." My continuing concern as an educator is that anxiety seems to keep leading people—parents, teachers and policy makers—in wrong directions. In fact, one of the nicer points that Friedman makes is that fear does tend to drive us in the wrong direction—his primary example being how the fear generated by 9/11 has driven our country away from our core values in counter-productive directions.

I agree with the sentiment that our children will need to be the best. What is missing is a new definition of best. Best in the flat world means being best at being yourself and letting your genius be your guide. But "being yourself" doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens in a complex social context. Therefore, being best includes having the disciplines to harmonize your interests, values,

Hot Dates

Today
4 p.m.

Girls basketball vs. Synergy
St. Mary's park

Friday, January 20

10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly
Fifth grade presenting

Monday, January 23

4 p.m.

Girls basketball vs. KDDB
7070 California Street

Tuesday, January 24

3:45 p.m.

Boys basketball vs. CAIS
150 Oak Street

Wednesday, January 25

4:15 p.m.

Girls basketball vs. SFS
Boys & Girls Club

Thurs., Jan. 26 & Fri., Jan. 27

Parent-teacher conferences

No school

No extended program



Thank You!

- To Bill Veiga, Marianne Evans, Danielle Conrad and Michael Silver for hosting Friday morning coffees.
- To Amanda Newstetter, Amanda Richard, Kathleen Cologne, Katherine Whitney, Karen Randig and Tina Leung for expertly leading the final group tour for admissions this school year!
- To the families in the kindergarten class for providing a delicious faculty and staff breakfast.

needs and theories with others in increasingly widening circles of association, which now include the entire world. Best means reinventing yourself daily as the requirements of the environment change, not so that you fit in but so that you stay on top of your game—your unique game.

Two years ago, eighth grader Amrit Khalsa had only been at CDS for a month when she said, “I love this school; here you can be whatever you want to be.” Many students, parents and teachers have voiced this same sentiment. Teachers new to the school are amazed not only at how our students speak up, but how they create the conditions for others to speak up. Recently, five-year-old Riley felt safe enough to speak up in front of the whole school and announced that her Mom was going to have surgery for a lump. A new sixth grader to the school reported, “Here we get to do projects and have more choices.”

Last week Rebecca and I visited University High School, again, to talk about our students and continue our own education about what high schools are looking for in applicants. The Director of Admission said, “We want students with high EQ (emotional intelligence) not just IQ. We want nice kids.” I loved hearing this. The chief marketer of one of the most “academic” high schools in the city is going public with what good educators have always known and new research continues to prove; i.e. that students bring their whole selves to school, and that optimal development of the whole self is required even if all you care about is maximizing academic achievement.

The CDS faculty is determined to make sure that the ability to take risks and learn continues through eighth grade and beyond. For the last three years the faculty at CDS has been refining our definition of what “nice kids” look like, and this definition shows up on the first page of our new progress reports under the title “Disciplines of Learning.” We do this because we want students to focus

on and take responsibility for the things that really DO make a difference, not just in the development of their IQ, but also the development of their EQ. These disciplines provide the structure for students both to be themselves and to make the environment safe for others to be themselves too.

Children’s Day School has every intention of being the best. We intend to be best at graduating students who put 100% of their energy into defining themselves constructively, creatively and gracefully in the world in ways which benefit both themselves and others. In many ways we already are. In some ways our children are already the best, too.

From the Office

CAIS Visit

The CAIS visiting committee will be at CDS from Sunday, January 29 through Tuesday, January 31 to follow up on our accreditation Self-Study. The committee will read their major recommendations and commendations to the CDS community at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 31 in the third floor art space. Everyone is welcome to attend.

If you are interested in reading the Self-Study document, there are two ways to do so. A hard copy will be kept in the CDS Library, and electronic versions are available via e-mail from Rebecca Kroll. Please e-mail her at rebeccak@cds-sf.org if you’d like a copy.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

There is no school and no extended program on Thursday, January 26 and Friday, January 27 during parent-teacher conferences. These two days are set aside so that parents and teachers can be assured time and space to discuss students’ mid-year progress. Teachers will be contacting you to schedule a conference for one of those two days. Childcare is available only during your conference time from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Childcare for events is open to any CDS student (grades pre-8), and for siblings who do not attend CDS in grades K-8. We unfortunately cannot accommodate children preschool aged or younger who do not attend CDS.

School Wish List

Faculty Lounge

The staff and faculty need a small or medium sized microwave oven for the faculty lounge. If you have a new or used one you'd be willing to donate, please e-mail Mary at maryd@cds-sf.org.

Faculty Breakfast Book

Check out the new faculty breakfast thank you book full of appreciative testimonials from well-fed faculty and staff! During each faculty breakfast, staff and faculty sign the thank you book, thanking the class and families responsible for the terrific breakfast. The week following breakfast, the book will be available in the classroom for parents to read. It is currently posted in the hallway outside the kindergarten classroom.

Lost & Found

All lost and found items will be on display during drop-off and pick-up on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 24 and 25. Come and claim your lost items; all leftover items will be donated to Community Thrift at the end of the day on Wednesday.

Nuevo Calendario Mensual

Por favor observe el calendario adjunto de Febrero, ¡en Inglés y en Español. ¡Note cuanto hay en el horario para Febrero y tenga un gran mes!

Monthly Calendar

Please note the attached calendar for February, in English and Spanish. Check out all that is on the agenda for February and have a great month!

From the Classroom

Blood Drive

In conjunction with their study of the human body, the kindergarten class will be hosting a blood drive at CDS on Friday, February 3 (this is a new date!) from 2:30-6 p.m. If you are able to give blood, please call 861-5432 x356 or e-mail Carlene at carlenel@cds-sf.org to give the teachers, students and participating blood bank an idea of how many parents will be participating. Thanks for your support and participation.

Events

MLK Celebration

On Monday, a clear and sunny morning, 16 CDS parents, staff members and students came together to celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King. After meeting in the CDS yard, we joined up with a larger Mission neighborhood contingent made up of parents, staff and students from the after school program at Marshall Elementary and the I Have a Dream Foundation. All together, we had close to 40 people in our contingent that spanned generations, from 3 year olds to grandmothers! Throughout the day, we sang civil rights movement songs, from "We Shall Overcome" to "If You Miss Me at the Back of the Bus." We played home-made drums, horns and clapped along with our song-leader. Some highlights of the day included reading from the Martin Luther King memorial wall behind the waterfall at Yerba Buena Gardens, playing a big game of freeze tag with students from all three programs, and meeting up with an amazing high school marching band. All the songs, community spirit and youthful energy felt like a great way to celebrate and reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. King. Thanks to all who were able to make it and we hope to see you next year.

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Scores

Boys: January 12, CDS vs. Creative Arts
CA 24, CDS 16

Boys: January 18, CDS vs. Synergy
Synergy 40, CDS 32, in O.T.

*There is much discrepancy around the score due to inconsistent and possibly faulty score keeping. Reputable sources say that the Bulldogs really *won!*

Basketball Calendar

Boys: Tuesday, January 24, 3:45 p.m.
CAIS, 150 Oak Street

Girls: Today, 4 p.m.
Synergy, St. Mary's Park, Murray & Justin Drive

Girls: Monday, January 23, 4 p.m.
Katherine Delmar Burke, 7070 California Street

Girls: Wednesday, January 25, 4:15 p.m.
San Francisco School, Boys & Girls Club

Extended Program News

Summer Camp 2006

Summer camp descriptions and registration packets will be sent home in early February. If you want to get a head start, all forms are available on our website at: http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html. As in previous years, camps are open to CDS families and community families so spread the word and tell your friends!

Enrichment Classes

Winter classes began last week and are off to a great start! Please note: spring classes will start earlier than listed on the CDS calendar. Spring term starts on March 20, *not* April 10. Registration packets will be sent home in early March.

February Vacation Camp

Registration packets for February vacation camp will be sent home with the *Weekly* the first week in February. The theme for the camp is an old favorite, "Urban Wildlife". The camp will be divided into three age groups: preschool, K-1, and 2-8, and runs from Tuesday, February 21 through Friday, February 24, from 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

After School Program

It's really important that all students are signed out from the extended program at the front desk. This is how we monitor safety and insure proper billing. Middle school students are encouraged to sign themselves out independently if they have permission, but regardless need to be signed out by someone each afternoon. Preschool parents, please continue to make the trek across the yard to sign out your children.

Also, all students who stay late past their class dismissal, whether it is for the after school program, enrichment classes, study hall, tutoring or for any other reason, need to have an extended program agreement on file. Please pick one up at the front desk or from Charlie if you haven't already

Japanese Classes Anyone?

Kyoko will be offering a Japanese language course to interested students starting Friday, January 20 from 3:45-4:45 p.m. The class is open to students in grades 1-8 and the fee is the same as for other enrichment classes—a seven week session is \$180 if signed up for after school drop-in and \$130 if signed up for level one care or above. Sliding scale is available. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Charlie at charlies@cds.sf.org or 861-5432 x315.

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. To volunteer, contact Michael Silver at 415-518-1803 or michael.silver@barclaysglobal.com or sign up on the sheet posted in the first floor entryway. 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?

- Marianne Evans, PTTA President, (415) 648-1731 or goevansgo@yahoo.com
- Amanda Richard, VP, Classroom Liaison Coordinator, (415) 695-0657 or amanda.richard@sbcglobal.net
- Laura Pliska, VP, Community Building Coordinator, (415) 641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com
- Ray Baxter, VP, Secretary, (415) 902-0765 or ray@warmroom.com
- Michael Silver, VP, Parent Volunteer Coordinator, (415) 597-2413 or michael.silver@barclaysglobal.com

PTTA Update

Volunteer for Upcoming Events

CDS Fiesta

Currently we are seeking people to help with solicitations, writers who can produce marketing materials for donation requests and set-up/clean-up volunteers. Volunteers should contact Stephanie Scarpulla at 415-999-6227 or Robin McClarren at 415-235-0295.

Yearbook

We need editorial-minded and detail-oriented volunteers to assist the seventh and eighth graders in producing the CDS yearbook. Also needed are candid photos from the classroom and other school activities from this year. Contact Leslie Edelman (415-334-8108 or leslieedelman@sbcglobal.net) with your materials and assistance.

Country Fair

Want to dwell in the warm heart of CDS? Consider stepping up as parent co-chair of the Country Fair. This is a unique opportunity to work closely with many members of the CDS community and to make a major contribution to this quintessential CDS event.

Upcoming Events

- **PTTA Meeting:** February 7. "Cultivating Individual Genius." Rick, Rebecca and other staff members will lead a discussion of this pillar of CDS philosophy. Discussion will center on a magazine article, "The Problem with Problems."
- **Community Building Committee:** Date for the next meeting is TBD. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska at 415-641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com.

If you have any comments, questions about the PTTA Updates, or items you would like included on the PTTA calendar, contact Ray Baxter at 415-902-0765 or ray@warmroom.com.

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, February 7

4:30 p.m.

PTTA meeting

Faculty lounge

Friday, February 10

Re-enrollment and sibling contracts mailed

Friday, February 17

Re-enrollment and sibling contracts due

Monday, February 20

President's Day observed

No school

No extended program

Children's Day School

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Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.

Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via email