



February 9, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Self Do It

When my mother was 75 she found herself alone. Even though she could make meals, entertain, clean house, tidy up and do many other things on her own, her husband, my stepfather, had taken care of her and a long list of other responsibilities himself. What she faced the day he died was not so much loneliness (she was actually looking forward to that) as anxiety—*anxiety that she would not be able to take care of herself.* On one of those days I found myself telling her the story of how her youngest granddaughter, Katie, had acquired the name of Self.

When Katie was between the ages of one and two, as people were helping her with things like putting on her coat, or eating, or peeling a banana, or getting into her car seat, she would interrupt with, "Self do it." She did this so often that one day a close friend of the family who happened to be visiting began referring to Katie as Self. My mom loved the story, and for the next ten years of her life, whenever she got anxious about her own capabilities she would say to herself, "Self do it."

As I watched the first grade girls on the playground the other day, they seemed so mature to me. Something about their language, the way they negotiated with each other, their bearing—they seemed like young women. Yesterday, as I was out front waiting for school to start, I observed one girl approach first grade teacher Robyn Moss to complain that another girl had called her a name. Robyn said, "Did you tell her you didn't like it?" When the answer was no, she suggested that she do so. Robyn and I saw the resulting interaction from a distance. The smiles came back on the girls' faces, and they went back to playing together. "Self do it."

The moral of this story is not that adults should always let kids work things out on their own. Adults need to know when and how to intervene. The point is that whether they intervene or not, they always need to keep their eye on the right ball: self-discipline. Just as it was less important for Katie to get her coat on than for Katie to learn that she could do it on her own, it was less important that the conflict get resolved than that the child learn how to solve her own social problems. Robyn was teaching one of the disciplines of conflict resolution—the first rule, face your antagonist. (Rule two is "talk it out" and rule 3 is "be open to learning.")

This is just one example of hundreds of sets of disciplines that the self needs to learn how to do. By now Rebecca and I have finished visiting high schools to talk about our eighth graders. There is one recurring theme: high schools want kids who feel "self do it." Paula sent me the following article by Jay Matthews from the January 17, 2005 edition of the *Washington Post*:

Hot Dates

Friday, February 10
10-10:15

Friday assembly
Third grade presenting

Friday, February 10
Re-enrollment contracts mailed
(due Friday, February 17)

Saturday, February 11 & Sunday,
February 12
8 p.m. (Saturday), Noon (Sunday)
Kaleidoscope Theater selectives class
performance
Mission High School
Little Theater

Monday, February 13
4-5:45 p.m.
Annual fund celebration
Faculty lounge



Thank You!

- To Cory Warren, Ray Cendana and Eliza Hemenway for stuffing Fiesta 2006 invitations.
- To Paula Solorio for translating the Fiesta invitation into Spanish.
- To Amanda Newstetter and Amanda Richard for helping greet prospective families at our visiting day last week.
- To Patricia Buse-Ruppert for donating mineral water for the State of the School Night.

“Zoe Bellars and Brad McGann, eighth graders at Swanson Middle School in Arlington, do their homework faithfully and practice their musical instruments regularly. In a recent delayed gratification experiment, they declined to accept a dollar bill when told they could wait a week and get two dollars. Those traits might be expected of good students, certainly no big deal. But a study by University of Pennsylvania researchers suggests that self-discipline and self-denial could be a key to saving U.S. schools. According to a recent article by Angela L. Duckworth and Martin E.P. Seligman in the journal *Psychological Science*, self-discipline is a better predictor of academic success than even IQ. ‘Underachievement among American youth is often blamed on inadequate teachers, boring textbooks, and large class sizes,’ the researchers said. ‘We suggest another reason for students falling short of their intellectual potential: their failure to exercise self-discipline. . . . We believe that many of America’s children have trouble making choices that require them to sacrifice short-term pleasure for long-term gain, and that programs that build self-discipline may be the royal road to building academic achievement.’”

There is no magic wand. It takes thousands of interactions in which these disciplines are practiced in order to be good at them. In fact, life provides us with apparent endless opportunities to practice. Raising self-disciplined young people is infinitely complex; there are many pressures at work in the millions of teachable moments life affords us: do your homework, don’t talk that way to your little brother, clean up your room—millions of opportunities—and there is no one right way for parents to handle these things. It is a long-term learning experience for all of us. It will all turn out right if we are striving toward the right goal: Self do it.

Almost every year I hear a story from one of my colleagues in high school about kids who got into trouble and the parents came to the rescue. Instead of parents taking the approach of letting the kids “take their punishment,” they bring in lawyers to defend the students because they want to make sure this doesn’t go “on their record.” They have their eye on the wrong ball, and I am willing to bet that this isn’t the first time they didn’t hold their child accountable for their own behavior. So when we feel conflicted about how best to approach one of these difficult situations, let’s remember, “Self do it.”

The Dirt

One More Family Farmer

Thanks to all who have been trained to be spring family farmers! We still need one more family to volunteer for the weekend of April 17 and 18. If you are available, please call Misty at 861-5432 x321 to schedule an individual training. Thanks for all of your support.

From the Office

Annual Fund Celebration

The Development Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the Annual Fund! All parents, faculty and staff are invited to stop by the faculty lounge on Monday, February 13 from 4-5:45 p.m. to share a glass of wine and celebrate the hard work of the Annual Fund class captains and members of the Development Committee. Come help us celebrate and appreciate the generosity of the CDS parent community.

Teaching Children to Resist Bias

A great brochure titled “Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias” is being sent home in backpacks of preschool through third graders with today’s *Weekly*. This brochure is published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and contains helpful stories and hands-on tips for talking about diversity with young children. Several CDS parents and teachers have found the brochure helpful and thought it might be something that others would appreciate reading. Extra copies in both Spanish and English are available in Charlie’s office if you didn’t get one or would like an extra.

Class Photos

Please note that class photos will take place on Tuesday, March 21, 2006.

From the Classrooms

Starfish Food Drive

The Starfish are working on a food project. Sofia Seirmarco had the excellent idea of conducting a food drive! So, the Starfish class is spearheading a school-wide food drive beginning Monday, February 13 and ending Friday, March 3. The food drive will operate much like the drive conducted in the fall. There will be two green SF Food Bank barrels just inside the main building door where families can place non-perishable food items. There are many children and adults who go hungry each day in San Francisco and we appreciate all donations.

Extended Program News

Summer Camp

Summer camp descriptions and registration packets will be sent home next week. 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!

February Vacation Camp

Registration packets for February vacation camp were sent home with the *Weekly* last week. The theme for the camp is an old favorite, "Urban Wildlife." The camp will be divided into three age groups: preschool, K-I, and 2-8, and runs from Tuesday, February 21 through Friday, February 24, from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. If you didn't receive a registration form, extras are available at the front desk.

Events

Got the Blues?

Ahh, the glory of adolescence. Don't you remember it like it was yesterday? You didn't have a care in the world. You knew yourself so well, felt completely understood by friends and family, had all the freedom you desired, and, of course, always looked your best and *always* felt extremely confident and at ease.

Right. That wasn't my experience either. And it seems

that no matter how much we try to protect those teenagers we love now from going through the same trials and tribulations, it's an unavoidable rite of passage – each one struggles to break free from the protective shell of childhood in order to emerge as an autonomous adult with an identity they can be proud of forming.

The subject of adolescence came up almost as soon as my first semester theatre selective got together and started discussing possible themes for our performance, back in September, and it was met with buzzing enthusiasm. The students were excited to find theatrical pieces that explored and validated their experiences as teenagers. What we discovered along the journey of creating this production surprised all of us, as we found plays like *Diary of Anne Frank* and *Wheelchair Blues* that brought our reflective process to a whole new level. What would it have been like to be a Jewish teenager in Holland during World War II? What would it be like to grow up with a body that could not perform at optimal level? And, like the character Bobby Mackenzie in *Absolution*, what would it be like to tell an outrageous lie, just to try being something other than the "good kid"? Though of course we haven't had the exact experiences and can't possibly pretend to know the answers just from studying these pieces theatrically, I think most of us involved would agree that we have become more open and empathetic. The world looks a little different now.

We're excited to share the results with you. Our show, aptly named, "Pituitary Gland Blues: Homework, Hormones, and Hysteria" has its run this weekend, February 11th and 12th, at the Little Theatre on the 4th floor of Mission High School. We have a Saturday evening performance at 8:00 p.m. and a Sunday matinee at noon. The show runs about an hour and a half with a ten minute intermission. The performances are free, and parking is free and plentiful at Mission High School.

-Emilie Rohrbach, Middle School Drama Teacher

Go Bulldogs!

Thanks to all who came out to support the boys' and girls' basketball teams this season! Go Bulldogs!

Fiesta 2006

Many efforts for Fiesta 2006 are underway and we are now asking all CDS families to donate or solicit at least two items for the auction. Auction items are due on March 3, 2006. If you have any questions about acquiring donations, filling out the donation forms, or you need more forms, please contact Tina Corse at tjcorse@comcast.net.

Some past successful donation ideas have included the following:

- Host a theme party, dinner, wine tasting or cocktails at your home.
- Donate frequent flyer miles or two nights at your favorite hotel.
- Part with your season tickets for one day or night at the opera or a sporting event.
- Create a gourmet picnic basket or earthquake provisions basket.
- Take a group of children/adults hiking, camping, skating or plan your own special activity.
- Ask a friend or relative to donate time at their vacation home.
- Present a gift certificate from your favorite restaurant or store.
- Donate a gift certificate from your child's ballet, gymnastics or swim school.
- Donate a gift certificate from your favorite yoga, pilates, tennis or gym instructor.
- Make available services for an attorney, graphic or interior designer, financial planner, contractor or home improvement or gardening skills for a CDS family.

You can easily drop off donations during morning drop-off during the week of February 13 through 17 and February 27 through March 3. Auction Committee members will be there to retrieve your donations and complete forms right from your car or answer any questions you may have. Once again, thanks for all of your support and enthusiasm.

Corporate Sponsors

Do you have a corporate contact who may want to sponsor Fiesta 2006? Attached you will find a flyer

outlining several sponsorship packages. Simply pass the potential sponsor's names on to Lisa Eltinge (lisaeltige@aol.com), Cindy Wilson (cindy@wilsonwest.com), Robin Wander (robinwander@hotmail.com) or Eileen Ridley (eridley@foley.com) and they will contact the sponsor for you.

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

Upcoming Dates

Friday, February 17

Re-enrollment and sibling contracts due

Monday, February 20

President's Day observed

No school

No extended program

Tuesday, February 21 – Friday, February 24

February vacation

No school

Extended program available

Children's Day School

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Contact Mary to receive the *Weekly* via email

