



March 2, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL
Weekly

Words from Rick

Waiting

Two weeks ago I lost my keys: keys to the school, keys to home, and worst of all, because it was 6 p.m. and dark, keys to my car. A development committee meeting had just ended; I was stranded at school and needed to get home. I retraced my steps in my mind (the tried and true discipline for finding lost objects) and found that I had left them at Bi-Rite at noon. My generous friend and Trustee, Ann Squires, volunteered to take me to Bi-Rite. The man behind the counter said that there had been a set that fit that description, but that another man had come by and retrieved them. He looked through their lost and found and found nothing. Ann drove me all the way home—a gesture for which I am eternally grateful.

How could I lose my keys? I felt so incompetent. It took extreme discipline, but I walked myself through the problem and step by step figured out how my life could go on. Key by key I got myself back in the game, but the hardest part was finding the patience for it.

As I went on with my life—now with a skeleton crew—I still had in the back of my mind that I had to do something to find my lost keys. Then yesterday, on my way back to school from Tartine, an inspiration told me to stop at Bi-Rite and ask again. Wonder of wonders—the woman behind the counter produced my lost keys. On the walk back to school those famous words of Mark Twain popped to mind, “If you don’t like the weather in New England, just wait a minute.”

I don’t know why waiting two weeks made any difference in finding the keys, but it seems to be true that waiting for the right moment is the key to a lot of things. It certainly is with raising children. For months we plan, teach, scheme, struggle, work and worry that they are still not reading; then suddenly, one day they are reading. This fall a set of “non-reading” third graders clicked into reading with the *Star Wars* series. Last year a number of preschoolers suddenly “learned to read” when they got interested in the poetry rocks in the Papa Artie Bower. You never know when a student will be ready to find the skills we have been challenged to help them find.

All year long in the Tadpole room, the teachers have been trying to get kids to play in the block area. (Block work is as critical to mathematical understanding as fine motor coordination is to writing.) They tried encouraging individuals and suggested it to the whole class; to make it as enticing as they could they even tried moving it into the most popular corner of the room. But nothing was working. One day for no apparent reason, the block area became popular. For the last three weeks marvelous construction has been the norm.

Hot Dates

Friday, March 3
10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly
First grade presenting

Wednesday, March 8
7-9 p.m.

Parent Education Night
Faculty lounge



Thank You!

- To Board of Trustee member Suzanne Abbey for loaning story books to the second grade class from the Head Royce Lower School in Oakland and for the gift of 20 dictionaries.
- To Lydia Yaffe for designing and producing the CDS Yellow Pages.
- To Olga Caid for braving the cold last Wednesday afternoon and generously helping with the preschool visit for prospective families. And thank you to Karen Randig for her excellent help with the early morning visits last Thursday for prospective kindergarten families.
- To Rich Torres and Marianne Evans for helping with the visiting afternoon for prospective preschool families.

With all the control we think we have over the circumstances, context and environment of our lives, it still seems to me that waiting for the stars to be in the right alignment is not an obsolete concept. The trick is finding the right balance between purposeful activity and waiting. Out in the Mendocino County woods I have had many opportunities to learn that there is a time for everything, and often that time is not NOW. You can dig steps into the hillside, but it will take you forever if you try to do it now; better to wait until the rains have soaked the earth, then it will be easy-breezy. To cut trees for firewood, it is best to wait until the fall when the sap is no longer flowing; the same can be said about pruning. When a road is blocked by a mudslide, it's time to change plans rather than risk going off the edge.

Balancing action and waiting is at the heart of raising children. It's useful to see our children as trees growing from acorns or pine cones or apple seeds, who depend on us for certain things rather than creatures whom we are responsible for molding. Ninety percent of their growth is inexorable and beyond "our poor power to add or subtract." Knowing when to add, when to intervene, when to cut a deal, and when to be quiet is critical. The reason this business is endlessly interesting is that there is no formula for knowing; one just has to keep learning.

Children need our advice, our guidance, our boundaries and our wisdom. As I am working in the woods I still hear my father's voice explaining, "Put the brush on the pile butt end first," or "Undercut the branch, first, then cut down from the top," or "Don't go empty-handed." When

raising my own children, I hear his voice again, "Sit up straight," "Don't talk with your mouth full," "Look at me when you are talking," "Don't interrupt," "Put your dishes in the dishwasher first, then you can go do your homework." But a wise parent watches and waits for the right moment for delivery. Timing is everything. If you find yourself saying, "If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times...!" try to shift gears and say to yourself, "I guess I have said that 99 times too often." Most kids only need to hear most things once. Then they need something else—maybe they just need practice and reminding.

Last week a teacher told me that he had been delightfully surprised to see a student trying out new, more constructive behavior; then he remembered that he had suggested this very thing months before. He had forgotten he had even said it; it had been just one of hundreds of things a teacher says in the course of a day.

If you can't get kids to change their behavior or if you just can't find your keys, pull waiting from your repertoire.

Next week: finding the balance between waiting and acting.

The Dirt

Country Fair Club

Come join the Country Fair Club every Thursday in March (that's today!) and April from 3:30-4:30 p.m. to work on farm and garden crafts to sell at the Country Fair. Katherine Whitney (Leyla and Kian's mom) will be leading a knitting group. Ms. Elizabeth, Ms. Karen and Ms. Misty will lead a variety of craft projects that may include making candles, cards or bookmarks with pressed flowers, rosemary vinegar, lavender scented soap and lavender honey. If the craft projects finish early, Ms. Misty will lead work projects to help beautify the garden for the Country Fair.

From the Office

CDS Yellow Pages

Thanks to CDS parent Lydia Yaffe, we now have CDS Yellow Pages! The yellow pages list services offered by families in the CDS community. A box of yellow pages is available at the front desk. Come and grab one soon—they are first come, first serve.

Class Photo Day

Please note that class photo day will be held on Tuesday, March 21.

Events

Fiesta 2006

Fiesta 2006 is coming up and we are looking for parent bartenders to help work at the bar during the Fiesta. No experience is necessary! Also, do you have more air miles than you know what to do with? Donate them to the Fiesta! We are currently looking for round-trip airfare mileage to auction during the live auction. Please e-mail Stephanie Scarpulla at sascarpulla@sbcglobal.net if you are interested, or if you have any questions.

Instant Wine Cellar

Donate your favorite bottle or bottles of wine to the "cellar" to be auctioned at the Fiesta on Friday, April 7. We're putting together a special collection of wines; any kind of wine is appreciated! Please include a short description (or anecdote) about why you love the wine and/or what makes it special. Be sure to fill out an auction donation form – extras can be found at the reception desk – and indicate "instant wine cellar collection" on the form and give it to Tina Corse at donation drop-off or Mary DeNardo in the Development Office by Monday, March 6. A special thank you to Board member Suzanne Abbey for sharing the wine cellar idea!

Parent Education Night

Please join us for parent education night on Wednesday, March 8 from 7-9 p.m. Two grade-based workshops will be held: "My Son is a Princess: Talking to Your Child about Gender and Sexuality" for parents of students in preschool through third grade and "Let's Get Real: The Impacts of Name Calling at CDS" for parents of students in fourth through eighth grade. No RSVP is necessary; refreshments will be served in the faculty lounge beginning at 6:30 p.m. See you there!

Childcare will be available. Please sign up with the receptionist before noon on Tuesday, March 7 so we can staff the event appropriately. Please note this service is provided for any CDS student (grades pre-8), and for siblings who do not attend CDS in grades K-8. We unfortunately cannot accommodate preschool aged children who do not attend CDS.

Graduation

Believe it or not, our first-ever eighth grade graduation is just around the corner! As planners begin preparing for this significant event, they would like your input, ideas and suggestions. If you have ideas for the graduation planning committee, please e-mail your suggestions to graduation@cds-sf.org by Friday, March 10. Thanks for your help!

Extended Program News

Summer Camp

Summer camps are starting to fill up! If you need registration forms, please check at the front desk, e-mail Charlie at charlies@cds-sf.org or download forms from our website at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html.

Middle School Writing Camp

This summer we'll be offering two writing camps designed specifically for middle school students. Please download forms directly from the website to make sure you have the correct dates. This is a great opportunity for middle school students to have fun writing and both camps are beginning to fill up. Download writing camp forms at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html.

February Camp

The February vacation camp was amazing and fun for everyone. Highlights included field trips to the Randall Museum, Dolores Park, Kid Power Park, the Paxton Gate store, a bird watching trip to view parrots on Telegraph Hill and a visit with the seals at Fisherman's Wharf.

Spring Enrichment Classes

Sign-up packets for spring enrichment classes are being sent home with today's *Weekly*. There are many new, exciting course offerings. If you don't receive one, extras are available at the front desk.

Spring Vacation Camp

Registration packets will be sent home with next week's *Weekly*. Camp runs from April 17 through April 21 and the theme is "San Francisco Explorations." You can also download forms on-line at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/vacation.html.

Make-Up classes

Winter enrichment classes are coming to a close. Several classes will be holding make-up sessions to account for holidays, conferences and the vacation week:

- Monday classes: Last day is March 6. Farm crafts will be holding an extra long class that day from 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday classes: Last day is February 28.
- Wednesday classes: Last day is March 1.
- Thursday classes: Last day is March 9.
- Friday classes: Last day is March 16.

PTTA Update

PTTA Officers and Liaisons

Are you interested in serving as a Classroom Liaison or PTTA Officer next year? Do you know someone you think would be ideal in one of these positions? If so, contact a current classroom liaison or officer with your suggestion. Liaisons are responsible for building and strengthening the CDS community in the classroom. PTTA Officers are responsible for building and strengthening community in the school; this includes classroom liaisons, volunteering, community building and communication. Next year's officer opportunities will include positions with special responsibilities for events and the middle school community.

Volunteer Opportunities

Yearbook

We need editorial-minded and detail-oriented volunteers to assist the seventh and eighth graders in producing the 2nd annual 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: Tuesday, March 14. "Our Values in Action." This PTTA meeting is a great one to come to if you're interested in discussing what CDS parents, teachers and students are doing about diversity and justice. We'd love to hear from you about what we're doing well, and where we still need to grow. This is a fantastic opportunity to come share what you think and help us brainstorm for the future!

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

Community Building Committee Date for the next meeting is TBD. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska (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 (415-902-0765, or ray@warmroom.com).

Upcoming Dates

Monday, March 13

Professional development day

No school

No extended program

Tuesday, March 14

4:30 p.m.

PTTA meeting

Faculty lounge

Tuesday, March 21

Class photo day

Children's Day School

333 Dolores Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-861-5432 (ph)

415-861-5419 (fax)

www.cds-sf.org

Editor: Mary DeNardo, maryd@cds-sf.org

Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.

Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via e-mail