



March 9, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Acting & Waiting: Finding a Balance

Knowing when to act and when to wait is a life-long learning experience. Often a simple, direct, automatic, gut reaction from an adult is exactly what a child is looking for and what they need. It's one of the primary ways children learn what the constraints of their environment are. A thoughtful reaction teaches that the matter merits thought. A "stay away from the edge!" coming straight from the hip, communicates something completely different. On the other hand, sometimes it is better to under-react, or not to react at all. With experience, teachers of children learn, "If you don't like the mood, just wait a minute."

A student will bring a problem to me. With my adult ears I hear an interesting moral dilemma or a challenging interpersonal conflict. I get involved to help solve a problem that may appear to me to be a long-term challenge. I have a conversation with the student, talk with his teachers, call his parents and then we decide to have a meeting. When I get back to the student to see how things are going, I find that the problem was solved as far as the student was concerned halfway into my first conversation. By the time he left the office, it was over; he had moved on.

Kids naturally want to move on. Just as a tree that has a damaged limb will put its energy into healthy limbs and keep growing, so a child wants to let yesterday's wounds go and put energy into new accomplishments and new relationships. Yesterday, on the playground in the morning I saw two sixth graders, whose relationship we had been worrying about two weeks ago, laughing and playing in a puddle. It's not that the strain had gone from the relationship; it's just that the girls were working it out in their own in a very healthy way. They both naturally wanted to be new and wanted their relationship to be new.

All too often an adult will step in and bring the problem back to where it used to be. Mike Riera, author of *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers*, *Staying Connected to Your Teenager: How to Keep Them Talking to You and How to Hear What They're Really Saying*, and *Surviving High School*, likes to remind parents not to "interview for pain." He is talking about the natural tendency for a parent to ask about yesterday's problem when the child comes home from school today. At a minimum, this reminds the child of something they were having trouble with rather than reminding them of their successes. At the more serious end it can establish a self-reinforcing dynamic in which the child and parent actually create a world that is not only self-destructive, but out of touch with reality.

This is one of the many reasons why the discipline of being in the moment is such a critical discipline. Seeing each moment as new and each child as new in a

Hot Dates

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

Friday assembly
Kindergarten presenting

Monday, March 13

Professional development day

No school
No extended program

Tuesday, March 14

4:30 p.m.

PTTA meeting
Faculty lounge



Thank You!

- To Bill Littmann, Sam Hunt and Jose Costas for building the beautiful bench and planter in the yard.
- A big thank you to Ann Van Gelder and Laura Fontana for helping out with the final preschool visit day for prospective families last Saturday.
- To Susie Carlson for gathering over 30 huge owl pellets for the second grade to dissect. They are beautiful.

new day is a way of waiting—noticing instead of acting—allowing new data to penetrate our preconceived understandings. When we see something that is not happening yet (like early talking, reading, multiplication tables, making friends) often part of the problem is that certain neurological connections have not been made in the brain. When teachers and parents focus on those apparent weaknesses, often they fail to notice growth and development in other parts of the brain—growth and development which will eventually contribute to overcoming the weakness. When we fail to notice this we ignore ways in which the child is becoming our ally in the correction of the “problem.”

We know it is important to distinguish between our own hopes and fears for the children and what their destiny is requiring of them. We can propose, but their genius will dispose, and the trick is for us to work in concert with that genius, rather than fight it. Being new in the moment is one of these tricks for guarding against our issues becoming more important than the child's. Patience is required.

To achieve a balance between action and waiting, one has to use the right fulcrum: an awareness that we are not alone in this enterprise. Other forces are acting while we are waiting. Neurons are growing; others are trying things their way; circumstances are changing; and wonder of wonders, our children are trying their best to be the best they can be.

With this view we'll be able to find the balance. In applying this fulcrum it is not necessary to believe that the universe is conspiring to give you everything you want and everything that your child wants. There is plenty of evidence that there are forces in the universe that *are* out to get us. It's just that if we act as if the universe is our ally, we are more likely to know when to wait, what to notice and how to act.

From the Office

Affinity Groups

The CDS community is in the process of creating affinity groups. An affinity group is a group of people that share a common experience. Examples might include parents with adopted children, families of color, fathers, a Jewish group or parents whose first language is Spanish. Affinity groups will come together to share stories, support one another around similar challenges and connect with other members of the CDS community. The format, topics and frequency of the meetings will vary depending on the interest and needs of the group. The purpose of creating affinity groups is to strengthen our community by increasing the ways that parents and families can find connection, support and voice at CDS. Starfish parent Michael Silver has already expressed interest in meeting with other LGBTQ parents. Please contact Charlie Stephens at 415-861-5432 x315 or charlies@cds-sf.org if you are interested in helping create an affinity group, either as a participant or a potential leader.

POCIS Elementary Conference

CDS families are welcome to attend the POCIS (People of Color in Independent Schools) elementary conference on Saturday, March 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (lunch provided). The theme of the conference is “Celebrate Your Story!” The conference is hosted by Town School at 2750 Jackson Street. If you'd like to attend, please RSVP by March 10 with Ana Gonzalez-Crane at 415-921-3747 x208 or gonzalez-crane@townschool.com. This is a free event!

Parking on Dolores Street

Please remember that parking illegally (along the median or in the driveway entrances) on Dolores street will result in a ticket.

Events

The Fiesta Needs You!

Fiesta 2006 is fast approaching and “night-of” volunteers are still needed to bartend and help with set-up and check-out. This is your chance to join the behind-the-scenes fun! Call Stephanie Scarpulla at 415-206-1107 if you are interested in volunteering.

Also, a great way to donate something to the auction is to purchase an advertisement in our program. Thank a

teacher, congratulate a student or advertise your business! Please contact Joe Becker at jozbe@earthlink.net for more information.

Finally, please consider sponsoring teacher attendance by purchasing a ticket for a teacher. This is a great way to support the faculty and staff and celebrate with them during the Fiesta.

Once again, thanks for all of your support and enthusiasm. Fiesta 2006 is going to be a great event!

Class Quilts on Display

The incredible class quilts are now on display in the first floor hallway in preparation for Fiesta, where they will be auctioned during the live auction. Each class is represented and the quilts reflect the hard work of parents, students and teachers. Each quilt is unique; come check them out!

After School Talent Show

On Friday, March 10 the after school program will host the first annual revival of the after school talent show. Join us on Friday, March 10 at 4 p.m. in the third floor art space for a kaleidoscope of spirit! Students in grades K-8 have worked together to create an awesome exhibition of talent. Rock bands, singing solos and origami are only a few of the many acts being prepared for Friday afternoon. See you tomorrow!

Extended Program News

Summer Camps

Summer camps are beginning to fill up. The preschool-K camps are half full and there are only a few spots left for 7th-9th graders in the writing camps. There is still plenty of room in the 1st-4th grade elementary camps. If you need registration forms, please check at the front desk, e-mail Charlie or download forms from our website at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html. Also, there is now a summer camp resource box in the library with literature about other city-wide camps for all ages. Check it out!

Spring Enrichment Classes

Sign up packets with many new class offerings were sent home last week. If you didn't receive one, extras are available at the front desk. Please note: there will be no advanced chess, only the regular class on the same day and time this term.

Spring Vacation Camp

Registration flyers for spring vacation camp are being sent home today. Camp runs from April 17 through April 21 and the theme is, "San Francisco Explorations." You can also download forms from our website at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/vacation.html.

Spring Vacation Camping Trip

The fifth through eighth graders are welcome to sign up for our first annual spring vacation camping trip. Students will camp for two nights in beautiful Point Reyes. Sign up sheets are being sent home today and more are available at the front desk.

Make-Up Classes

Winter enrichment classes are coming to a close. The last Japanese class for winter term will be held Friday, March 17.

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 second 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!

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

Tuesday, March 21
Class photo day

Thursday, March 30
4 p.m.
Boys & Girls Club
Staff vs. middle school basketball game

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