



April 13, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

I and We

Home Schooling is an Oxymoron

About two weeks ago, Ms. Alicia noticed Leaping Lizard Tjaard show interest and signs of beginning to read. He would come into the classroom each morning and sound out words on the morning message board. She got him a few beginner reader books to see what he could read. Tjaard became really excited after he read his very first book and read it over and over and over again. She had him take it home and read it to his mom and dad. The next day he came to school very excited and announced that his parents were surprised. Alicia encouraged Tjaard to read the book to his friends. After he read it to his buddies she noticed that some of his buddies who'll go to kindergarten next year were a little surprised that Tjaard knew how to read before them (Tjaard has another year of preschool). Now they have Tjaard read them a book every morning; they have learned how to memorize what each page says, and then they "read" to other children as well. The teachers report that there is now a reading frenzy going on in the Leaping Lizard class!

Each week the first and fifth graders learn together. Recently, they have been on a letter-writing campaign, sending each other letters in which they tell their buddy three facts about themselves and ask them three questions. On Wednesday they played a game in which one person said two facts and one fictional thing about themselves and the rest of the group had to guess what was fiction. Both groups were amazingly good at determining fact from fiction. They also used a wide variety of techniques, both verbal and non-verbal, to fool the others.

These are just two of the many moments of action that occur all day long, 175 days a year, for all the students at CDS. Consider the educational objectives: not just reading and writing, but many higher-order thinking skills and in fact, the full development of the whole child, and each in a way that works for him or her. I call this education and distinguish it from training (which is also a good thing.)

Twelve years ago I visited the lab school of UCLA and had a long talk with the assistant principal in charge of curriculum. She had just decided to leave schooling and get into curriculum development for a software company. Her main motivation as she stated it was that, "School is obsolete. Kids can learn this stuff so much better and faster on computers." A challenging idea. It was thought provoking for me. Just that month at my school one of the 8th graders had acquired some algebra software and worked through a whole year of algebra on the computer. Hmmm.

Hot Dates

Friday, April 14
10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly
Eighth grade presenting

Friday, April 14

7-9:45 p.m. (6th grade)
7-10:45 p.m. (7th and 8th grade)
Middle school dance
Boys & Girls Club

April 17 – April 21

Spring vacation
No school
Extended program available



Thank You!

- To Nerius Mercado and Marianne Evans for hosting a fabulous Friday morning coffee.

Naaaaa. Certainly, if all we are doing is drilling on the basic skills, one should probably just stay home and get some really good software, but that is not all we are trying to do.

The central reality is that human beings did not learn to survive on this planet by brute strength, but by sticking together. Even if you wanted to claim that it was our ability to design and develop technology, you would still be stuck with the primacy of humans as social animals; very few major technological advances or scientific discoveries were made by an individual acting alone. Our advances, let alone our very survival, are the result of working together. For best results we want one person's learning to have an impact on the learning of others and achieve that explosion of interactions—each person building on another's ideas. Depending upon one's inclinations, it is a sad or happy fact of life that a human being in isolation is a very vulnerable creature.

Talking with me about the buddy projects, the teachers went on about how collaboration between older and younger students brings out the best in everyone. "The fifth graders take their responsibilities so seriously. They love making a difference to the first graders." "They were amazed to see how fast and how clever the first graders are..." "Yeah, and how delightful they are as people." "They are learning to put themselves in someone else's shoes." "So many kids discovered and appreciated strengths in other students."

Next week: Self-reliance

From the Office

Call for Submissions

Would you like to share a story about anything relating to diversity or social justice and/or your personal experiences at CDS? The first Diversity and Social Justice Newsletter will be going home to families in early May. Tell us your story! Please e-mail submissions to Charlie Stephens at charlies@cds-sf.org.

LGBTQ Affinity Group

The first LGBTQ affinity group meeting will be on Wednesday, April 26 at 6 p.m. in the faculty lounge. If you'd like to join us for food and conversation, please do! If you have any questions, please call Michael Silver at 415-597-2413 or 415-564-9734 or Charlie Stephens at 861-5432 x315.

From the Classrooms

Save the Date

Don't forget: the middle school students are holding a car wash fundraiser for their dance on Saturday, April 29 from 1-4:30 p.m. in the CDS parking lot. Student volunteers are still needed, as are car wash supplies. If you are able to volunteer at the car wash or donate items, please contact dougg@cds-sf.org. Thanks for your support.

Events

Country Fair

Have you ever licked a dasher? Are you curious about sheep sheering? Will your relatives believe you when you describe marveling at newly shorn sheep in the city while simultaneously enjoying barbequed oysters? These are only a few of the pleasures promised by the CDS County Fair.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 6 we'll gather in the CDS yard to have fun, enjoy our children and friends, and celebrate the creativity flowing from our classrooms and farm and garden.

Admission is free. We've planned lots of activities to entertain and amuse – the famous CDS barbeque is a real bargain, and the bake sale features treats from our own kitchens.

Knitters and spinners have been busy all winter producing unique creations featuring hand spun wool from our own sheep. Our children are brewing concoctions for the country market: delicious herbal vinegars, lip balms, bath salts and more. The market will also feature farm-fresh Eatwell produce and home-made granola and CDS logo items.

In the collective spirit of the fair, everyone is called upon to give some time to make it happen. In fact, some of the best ways to enjoy the fair are by judging the three-legged race or cup-cake walk, mixing papier mache goop, overseeing the creations at the art and jewelry

workshop, experiencing the tactile pleasures of washing freshly shorn wool, flipping burgers on a six foot barbeque grill, or monitoring cash flow at the bake sale and country market.

Similar to last year, we have assigned each class to specific activities. After spring vacation, we'll be asking families to sign up for one or more ½ hour shifts on the day of the fair in the following areas:

- Tadpoles: old fashioned games and races
- Leaping Lizards: bake sale
- Starfish: face painting and table art
- Kindergarten: BBQ
- 1st grade: set-up and break-down
- 2nd grade: fiber arts
- 3rd grade: ticket sales
- 4th grade: ice cream and CDS logo items
- 5th & 6th grades: market
- 7th & 8th grades: old fashioned games and races

Fiesta 2006

Thank you to everyone who made the Fiesta such a huge success! The event would not have been possible without the hard work of many, many individuals. We are still calculating numbers and will let you know the grand total as soon as possible. Thank you to all who attended, dined, placed bids, danced and helped create such an amazing CDS community event.

Extended Program News

Summer Camps

The preschool-K camp has just a few spots left. If you are interested in having your child participate, please turn in your forms as soon as possible. The elementary camps are about half full. To check on openings and camp offerings, please go to the CDS website at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html or call Charlie at 861-5432 x315.

Spring Vacation Camp

There is still room left in all spring vacation camps: preschool, kindergarten and 1st-8th grade. Please pick up a registration form at the front desk if you'd like to sign up. The theme is "Exploring San Francisco" and all the groups have great activities planned.

PTTA Update

Last Meeting of the Year!

The last PTTA meeting of the school year will be held on Tuesday, May 2 from 4:30-5:45 p.m. in the faculty lounge. The meeting's focus will be year-end wrap up and plans for next year. Everyone is invited; childcare is free for those attending the meeting.

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

Saturday, April 29

1-4:30 p.m.

Middle school car wash

CDS parking lot

Sunday, April 30

9 a.m.

Country fair work day

CDS yard

Tuesday, May 2

4:30-5:45 p.m.

PTTA meeting

Faculty lounge

Saturday, May 6

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Country Fair

CDS yard

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Contact Mary to receive the *Weekly* via e-mail