



April 27, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

I and We

Self-reliance

When I was in school in the 1950's, parents, educators and schools acted as if the self was irrelevant—to be self-interested bordered on selfish and self-centered was the same as selfish. Character was about being good, not about being true to your character. Conformity was in; individuality was out. We seemed to have lost the notion of self-reliance, which formed the basis for that uniquely American ideology so famously expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay "On Self-Reliance:"

"Whoso would be a man, must be a non-conformist. He who would gather mortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world."

But during the 1960's came a tipping point. By the early 70's being oneself had become the core of the American consciousness. Obvious in our music, on television, and in literature, it was nowhere stronger than in education. For the last thirty-some years educators have known that they are being held accountable not so much for a program as for delivering education which is precisely correct for each child. This is a good thing, for an educator's job is to lead each child's genius out into the world to function gracefully and effectively within it.

And yet, self-reliance has lost its way in a sea of self-absorption. We often see people trying to be true to themselves in a vacuum—as if they live and move in spiritual isolation. Not only are they a frustration to others, but even more so to themselves. They cannot seem to get happy. The harder they try, the more they perpetuate their unhappiness.

This self-absorption brings with it a concomitant confusion about community, rules, discipline, social responsibility and justice. Believing in the sanctity of the individual child translates all too often into acting as if our adult needs, the needs of the community, the needs of others, are unfortunate impositions upon the child. Parents and teachers say "guidelines" when they mean rules, give kids choices when there really is only one responsible choice, and say "listen" when they mean obey. In fact, obedience, which is sometimes quite an appropriate stance in the world, became a dirty word in the 60's and never recovered.

Central to the CDS culture is an understanding that brings the self and other together: the understanding that we exist in relationship. Our relationships are essential to ourselves; in fact, we are our relationships. The kids actually know

Hot Dates

Friday, April 28
10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly
Earth day celebration

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

All dates now posted on the CDS
website!

www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html



Thank You!

- To Alycia Freeman – interior designer and parent-extraordinaire – who redesigned our reception area, including the new front desk. Thank you, Alycia, also for spending last weekend painting the yellow wall. And thank you to Sam Hunt, who cheerfully helped Alycia build the new front desk and install it last Sunday. This is a project long overdue – thank you both for making it happen!
- To Suzanne Jachinowski and Karen Levesque for giving their time, energy and expertise toward writing and designing our capital campaign survey.
- To Debbie Jasso for providing a wonderful array of treats for Friday morning coffee.

this. By age 2, when empathy begins to kick in, they begin learning that their friends are essential to who they are, and that they have to harmonize their will with the wills of others to make those relationships work, sometimes even making sacrifices of self-interest to find self-fulfillment.

There was a tense moment in preschool earlier in the month during an Easter egg coloring activity. As each child was carefully protecting his eggs, waiting for the dying to begin, Kian suddenly cried out, “One of my eggs is cracked.” Before the teacher could even respond to the potentially disastrous situation, Paolo piped up, “Here, you can have one of mine.” When asking the preschool teachers for examples of this phenomenon of young humans finding win-win solutions to social dilemmas, I was swamped with stories. Dozens occur every day.

By the time children are in school, fulfillment of self requires making a positive difference in the lives of others, and this is what we see everywhere at Children’s Day School. The other day I talked with Samuel, the eighth grade buddy of Aidan. When he talked about Aidan he sounded as if he was a member of the faculty. His relationship with Aidan is an important part of his self-esteem, and is of priceless value to Aidan. When the students celebrated Cesar Chavez’s birthday last month with songs and presentations, one third grader quoted Chavez’s famous statement: “The end of all education should surely be service to others.”

I am regularly impressed by how deferential and respectful the students are to each other most of the time. It is dramatically displayed at assembly by the way 250

students listen to one person talking. Three first graders even came up to me after the last assembly to apologize for talking while others were making announcements.

The recognition that each of us can benefit from the other, and that we all benefit from our community to which we must be devoted for our own good is a major lesson the school teaches constantly as a continuous part of the activity in and out of class. In a discussion about rules in the seventh grade class last year Cara Keller volunteered, “By following rules we gain trust and more freedom.”

It is true (as Polonius says to Laertes) that if we are true to ourselves, we cannot be false to anyone. However, for this to be true there must be the recognition that the converse is also true: that being true to others is necessary for being true to ourselves. Harmonizing what we want with what others want is essential for happiness. We cannot hurt others without hurting ourselves. And ultimately, we do not exist outside of the difference we make in the world. Sometimes it seems that the students know this better than the adults.

Next week: When trouble strikes.

From the Office

Annual Fund Update

We are happy to report that we have reached (and surpassed!) our parent fundraising goal of \$115,000. Thanks to the dedication and generosity of many, we have raised just over \$118,000! This is an incredible testament to the support and enthusiasm of the CDS community. Once again, thank you for your continued commitment to CDS.

Fiesta Update

Wait, we have even more good news. We are happy to report that Fiesta 2006 raised approximately \$85,000 toward our Annual Fund! This is a record-breaking total; many thanks to everyone who attended, donated, solicited, purchased and danced the night away!

Welcome Ryan Lambert

Please welcome Ryan Lambert, our new Office Manager. Ryan has worked as an office manager for several years, taught drama classes at an elementary school, has a 14 year-old son and is a musician—wow! Stop by and say hello.

Lost and Found

All lost and found items will be on display at the front gate today and tomorrow. Please claim your lost items; all leftover items will be donated to Community Thrift at the end of the day on Friday.

From the Classroom

Photo Award

Congratulations to eighth grader Teija Corse for being chosen as a semi-finalist in the Boys & Girls Club national photography competition.

Middle School Car Wash

The middle school students are holding a car wash to raise money for their dance this Saturday, April 29 from 1-4:30 p.m. Roll your car into the CDS parking lot and let the student volunteers go to work. Prices range from \$5-\$15 and your car will drive away squeaky clean.

Events

Country Fair Work Day

Please join us in beautifying and preparing the CDS yard for the upcoming Country Fair. On Sunday, April 30 from 9 a.m. until noon, volunteers will gather in the yard and work on specific projects in preparation for the Fair. Adults are welcome and childcare will be provided; please call the receptionist to sign up. Food and beverages will be provided. See you there!

Country Fair

Longer evenings and somewhat balmy weather proves that May is just around the corner...as is the annual CDS Country Fair! Join us in the CDS yard on Saturday, May 6 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. to enjoy great company, food, games and hand-made crafts. Experience old fashioned fun: wool washing, hand-churned home-made ice cream and a market brimming with produce and hand-made treasures. There will be entertainment and activities for kids of all ages.

The famed sheep-shearing opens the fair at 11 a.m.—don't miss it! Raffle away with Lydia and Scott Yaffe, second grade parents. Have your face painted by the Starfish parents who will surprise you with a creative design.

Remember that one of the best ways to enjoy the fair is

to help out—and you don't have to come to any meetings! We need people to supervise games and races, churn ice cream, paint faces, help with simple arts and crafts, sell baked goods and food tickets, staff the barbecue, and oversee student merchants at the country market and CDS merchandise booth. We also need a strong crew to help with set-up and the community clean-up afterward. Please sign up for a ½ hour shift when your class contact calls you.

Call for Bake Sale Donations

Add your own touch to the Country Fair by bringing baked goods to the bake sale, organized this year by the Leaping Lizards class. Bring items suitable for eating at the Fair—cookies and bars, sweet breads or cupcakes. Items are packaged for sale in \$1 increments. Remember that simple treats are great; cupcakes and brownies were the hot items at last year's sale. Please deliver your baked goods to the Fair on Saturday; we have no place to store them overnight.

Special call for Cupcakes

The cupcake walk is a perennial Country Fair favorite. We need lots of cupcakes to make it happen. Contact Diana Hunt at samanddi@pacbell.net if you can bake a dozen or two.

Extended Program News

Spring Vacation Camp

Spring vacation campers had a great time “exploring San Francisco.” They built replicas of the Golden Gate Bridge, sang songs about San Francisco, played at Ocean Beach, visited the Golden Gate Park windmill, ventured to the Academy of Sciences, explored Douglass Park playground, enjoyed Dolores Park and investigated new and old maps of our fair city. Thanks to all who participated.

Summer Camp Update

Currently all of the preschool-K summer camps are either full or have only a few spots left. Please sign up soon if you are interested! Elementary and middle school camps have plenty of openings, especially the wonderful theater camp. If you know children from the community who might be interested, please let them know that we have a great theater camp planned, as well as many other exciting options. Spread the word!

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, May 6

11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Country Fair
CDS yard

Thursday, May 11

6 p.m.

“Talking to Your Kids About Sex”

Discussion for all parents led by Amanda Newstetter,
CDS parent and sex educator
Faculty lounge

Friday, May 19

7 p.m.

CDS middle school students' adaptation of
Twelfth Night
Dolores Street Church

Saturday, May 20

2 p.m.

CDS middle school students' adaptation of
Twelfth Night
Dolores Street Church

All dates now posted on the CDS website!

www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html

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