



January 12, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

360 Degree Feedback

A week before the winter performance a seventh grader came up to me after rehearsal and said, almost in a whisper, “Mr. Rick, you are not hitting the right notes on your bass.” I said, “Thank you. I know, but thank you anyway for telling me.”

Last year Aimee heard through the grapevine that the buddy system was not working—a new parent wasn’t feeling welcomed. The PTTA then spent four meetings talking about the inclusion of new families, issues of diversity and community-building. This week the PTTA reviewed last year’s initiatives and their effectiveness.

“360 degree feedback” is a concept that originated in the business world in the mid '90s. It refers to a formal approach to employee evaluation in which a person gets feedback from below, beside and above them on the organizational chart. There is no business where 360 degree feedback is more important than education. To maximize performance one has to maximize learning; to maximize learning a person needs to get feedback from all directions. With our goal of making sure that we are challenging each child appropriately, communication among teachers, parents and students must be free, open and disciplined.

A student’s ability to receive criticism is, of course, essential for their progress in school. It is certainly traditional for teachers to give students frequent feedback all day long. It is not, however, as normal for them to be taught to give criticism constructively; yet to be prepared for the world, giving constructive criticism should be of equal importance in the curriculum.

We must be doing a pretty good job. As we write recommendations for eighth graders applying to high schools, this is one of the disciplines we can say many of our students have mastered. One of the first things that most impressed me about this group three years ago was how good they were at giving each other feedback about their writing, their ideas and anything else. Last year the second graders brought me a petition for the building of a pool on the playground. (The teachers, I have to say, aided and abetted this little rebellion.) There were letters protesting the raising of the swings; then there was a protest about the lowering of a swing.

Some of this comes from formal training in writing lessons. They are trained in how to give their peers feedback about their writing. But it also comes from the general culture of the school where students feel they get to say anything to anybody as long as they do it with integrity and respect.

For these educational objectives to be met, the adults have to be good at it also;

Hot Dates

Tonight
4 p.m.

Boys basketball game vs.
Creative Arts
1430 Scott Street

Friday, January 13

10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly
Sixth grade presenting

Monday, January 16

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

No school

No extended program

Monday, January 16

10 a.m.

MLK Day march
Meet in the CDS yard



Thank You!

- To Karen Randig and Kara Schleunes for their super-excellent help with the first admission tour of 2006.
- To Scott Yaffe for donating three violins to the music program.
- To Elizabeth Seirmarco, Jim Reynolds, Debbie Jasso, Laura Pliska, Springer Huseby, Amanda Richard, Karen Randig, Mary Beth Towery, Molly Tyson, Melanie Wise, Sanlin Cory, Michael Silver, Tina Leung, Tacy Gaede and Tracy Kirkham for helping with the Admission Open House and doing a fantastic job!
- To Danny Zemanek for donating a copy of the Winter Performance on DVD.

in fact, we have to be excellent at it. For this to be true the boss has to be good at it. The boss has to insist that the teachers are good at it, and we all have to encourage, remind and actively invite others to do it. (Because it's hard and in some ways feels unnatural. Most people don't like to deliver negative feedback.) For us, evaluation is not something that happens once or twice a year, but daily.

It is essential for us, not only to make sure our children get the very best education they can, but to make sure they are effective in the world. Two years after my daughter Lizzie graduated from St. Paul's School in Oakland, we were sitting at the dinner table and she said, "The new science teacher is not a good teacher. He just isn't teaching right. I can't understand what he is trying to do." Of course I said, "Well, you have to go talk to him."

"I couldn't do that."

"Sure you can."

"No. I can't."

"Well, then talk to the Dean."

"No, I would never do that!"

"Well..."

"Dad! I don't want to talk about it!"

The next night at dinner she said, "I talked to the Dean."

"Great. What happened?"

"I can tell that she talked to him, because his behavior changed. But it got worse. I'm even more frustrated now."

"Well, now you have to go back to her and give her feedback on the results."

"I can't do that."

"Yes you can. You have to."

"Dad, I don't want to talk about it."

The next night she reported, "I did talk to the Dean, again, and she obviously talked to him again, because he changed his behavior even more, but it got even worse." "Wow."

"But, you know what I learned? I learned how I could learn from him, so it's O.K."

This is often the way it is with human beings. We don't always get the results we want. We can't always get the other person to behave the way we want them to. But that's not the point, anyway. The point is to learn, and to maximize learning we have to talk to each other!

My main goal is to foster and support a school where people talk well with each other—kids to kids, teachers to kids, kids to teachers, parents to teachers, teachers to parents, and everyone can tell the boss. That is 360 degree feedback to me.

The Dirt

Family Farmer Training

It's that time again! The winter Family Farmer Training will be held on Saturday, January 28 in the farm and garden. Becoming a family farmer is a great way to get to know the sheep and chickens and spend time in the beautiful farm and garden. The training will last approximately one hour (at 9 and 10 a.m.) and will provide you with all of the information you'll need to care for the animals and the garden. We have space for twelve families (a maximum of six during each time slot) and we'll be scheduling dates for the next four months; please bring your calendars. You only need to commit to two weekends and/or holidays during the next four months and in return you'll have the chance to bury your fingers in JoJo's warm, soft wool and collect fresh eggs for Sunday morning breakfast. Please RSVP with Misty at 861-5432 x321 to sign up for a training at 9 or 10 a.m; leave your name, phone number and time slot you prefer. If you were trained last May or September and want to take care of the animals just RSVP and show up at 10 a.m. to pick dates; you don't need to attend the training. Thanks for your help.

From the Office

CAIS Visit

The CAIS visiting committee will be at CDS from Sunday, January 29—Tuesday, January 31 to follow up on our accreditation Self Study. If you are interested in reading the Self Study document, there are two ways to

School Wish List

Faculty Lounge

The staff and faculty need a small or medium sized microwave oven for the faculty lounge. If you have a new or used one you'd be willing to donate, please e-mail Mary at maryd@cds-sf.org. Thanks.

do so. A hard copy will be kept in the CDS Library, and electronic versions are available via e-mail from Rebecca Kroll. Please e-mail her at rebeccak@cds-sf.org if you'd like a copy.

Office Manager Needed

Our search for a permanent Office Manager has begun – and we need your help spreading the word! Amanda Richard and Kendra Klein have been doing a fabulous job sharing the Office Manager position this fall, but unfortunately neither of them is available on a permanent basis. Amanda will be moving in to the Development Office while Marion is on maternity leave and Kendra will be moving to Hawaii in April.

The Office Manager reports to Rebecca Kroll, the Assistant Head of School, and will be responsible for running the school office and providing high-level administrative support to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees. This position provides a great opportunity to be involved in the daily administrative operations of CDS and all of the exciting projects that happen here regularly, and to work with the fabulous administrative team. To view the detailed job description, please visit our website (www.cds-sf.org). If you are interested in the position or know of a great candidate, please have him or her send a cover letter and resume to Kendra Klein via mail or e-mail (kendrak@cds-sf.org).

Parent Teacher Conferences

There is no school and no extended program on Thursday, January 26 and Friday, January 27 during parent-teacher conferences. Childcare is available only during your conference time from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Childcare for events is open to any CDS student (grades pre-8), and for siblings who do not attend CDS in grades K-8. We unfortunately cannot accommodate children preschool aged or younger who do not attend CDS.

From the Classroom

Blood Drive

In conjunction with their study of the human body, the kindergarten class will be hosting a blood drive at CDS on Friday, February 10 from 2:30-6 p.m. If you are able to give blood, please call 861-5432 x356 or e-mail Carlene at carlenel@cds-sf.org by tomorrow, Friday, January 13 to give the teachers, students and participating blood bank an idea of how many parents will be participating. Thanks for your support and participation.

Events

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

For the second year, CDS teachers, administrators, students and families are encouraged to join the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Monday, January 16. We'll be joining other neighborhood schools and organizations to celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. We will sing songs, make signs, visit Yerba Buena Gardens and participate in the celebration at Civic Center. Please join us for this meaningful and important celebration! We will be meeting at CDS at 10 a.m. on Monday, January 16 (regular school is closed) and will finish up at the Civic Center in the early afternoon. We'd

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Scores

Girls: January 9, CDS vs. KDDBS

KDDBS 9, CDS 8

Boys: January 11, CDS vs. SFS

SFS 31, CDS 26

Basketball Calendar

Girls: Thursday, January 19, 4 p.m. vs. Synergy
St. Mary's Park, Murray and Justin Drive

Boys: Tonight, 4 p.m. vs. Creative Arts at Kipp
1430 Scott Street

Wednesday, January 18, 4:15 p.m. vs. Synergy
Boys & Girls Club, 450 Guerrero Street.

The CDS futsal (indoor soccer) players need a coach! If you'd like to coach the co-ed futsal team, please contact Mr. Jim at 861-5432 x372.

love for families and the larger CDS community to attend! To find out more please contact Michael Gast at michaelg@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x329. Please RSVP with Michael so we know how many people to expect. For more information on the celebration you can visit www.norcalmlk.org.

Extended Program News

Enrichment Classes

Winter enrichment classes began this week and are off to a great start! Please note: spring classes will start earlier than listed on the CDS calendar. Spring term begins on March 20, not April 10. Registration packets will be sent home in early March.

After School Program

It's really important that all students are signed out from the extended program at the front desk. This is how we monitor safety and insure proper billing. Middle schoolers are encouraged to sign themselves out independently if they have permission, but regardless, need to be signed out by someone each afternoon. Preschool parents, please continue to make the trek across the yard to sign out your children.

Also, all students who stay late past their class dismissal, whether it is for the after school program, enrichment classes, study hall, tutoring or for any other reason, need to have an extended program agreement on file. Please pick one up at the front desk or from Charlie if you haven't already.

Japanese Classes Anyone?

Kyoko will be offering a Japanese language course to interested students starting Friday, January 20 from 3:45-4:45 p.m. The class is open to students in grades I-8 and the fee is the same as for other enrichment classes—a seven week session is \$180 if signed up for after school drop-in and \$130 if signed up for level one care or above. Sliding scale is available. If you are interested in signing up, please contact Charlie at charlies@cds.sf.org or 861-5432 x315.

PTTA Update

State of the PTTA Meeting

At this week's PTTA meeting we evaluated the costs and benefits of the past year's efforts to nourish and support the CDS community and to create a welcoming environment for families. The consensus is that most of the changes made in the past year were positive.

Noteworthy accomplishments of the past year include the establishment of a PTTA officer and standing committee dedicated to community building, the establishment of welcoming liaisons in the majority of classrooms, and the new format and location for the Welcome Picnic.

One area of concern is the toll that some events take on

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

frequent volunteers. A more detailed report in the minutes of this meeting will be sent out through the liaisons in the next week.

If you have any areas of concern, comments about the activities of the welcoming committee or ideas and suggestions about building the CDS community, you can contact any PTTA Officer.

Volunteer for Upcoming Events

CDS Fiesta

Currently we are seeking people to help with solicitations, writers who can produce marketing materials for donation requests and set-up/clean-up volunteers. Volunteers should contact Stephanie Scarpulla at 415-999-6227 or Robin McClarren at 415-235-0295.

Yearbook

We need editorial-minded and detail-oriented volunteers to assist the seventh and eighth graders in producing the 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:** February 7. "Cultivating Individual Genius." Rick, Rebecca and other staff members will lead a discussion of this pillar of CDS philosophy. Discussion will center on a magazine article, "The Problem with Problems."
- **Community Building Committee:** Date for the next meeting is TBD. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska at 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 at 415-902-0765 or ray@warmroom.com.

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, Jan 26 & Friday, Jan 27

Parent-teacher conferences

No school

No extended program

Tuesday, February 7

4:30 p.m.

PTTA meeting

Faculty lounge

Children's Day School

333 Dolores Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

415-861-5432 (ph)

415-861-5419 (fax)

www.cds-sf.org

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Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.

Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via email