



November 10, 2005

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### Small Differences

Last weekend I read about a parasite that disturbs a rat in only one small way. It enters the brain and takes away its instinctive fear of cats, replacing that aversion with an affinity. Other than being drawn to cats, the rat's behavior is normal in every way. As you can imagine, this tiny change makes all the difference in the rat's life; more precisely, it tends to have a detrimental effect on life-span.

Many years ago, at another school, a parent was badgering the third grade teacher to give her son more academic challenge. At one point she said, "I am worried about how George will do in seventh grade." In response the teacher kept trying to reassure the mother that her son was doing fine. In frustration the teacher came to me for advice. I asked her if there was anything in George's performance she was concerned about, and she said yes. George was dependent on adults. When faced with a question, he would always look to an adult for the answer before trying it himself. George's parents were not paying attention to the right learning difference.

An eighth grade student at another school had mastered his dyslexia and had just been accepted at one of the top high schools in the area. That spring he was put on probation for breaking a major school rule. He and his parents were told that if he broke any more rules he would not go on the eighth grade trip. His parents protested, but we held firm. The very next day he broke the very same rule. When we did what we said we would do, the parents made the biggest stink you can imagine. They pleaded, they argued, they threatened, but of course, we didn't back down. Four years later, at his high school, where he was president of the class, he was kicked out of school and not allowed to graduate. I know the parents thought they were going to bat for their son; the problem is, they were swinging at the wrong pitches.

Some time ago at yet another school the teachers of Alvin met to discuss their concern that Alvin, a seventh grader, was disrespectful. He would interrupt his classmates in class discussions; he would talk back to teachers, he had an air of arrogance. What was remarkable for me about the discussion is that at one point one of the teachers said, "The thing is, Alvin is such a good student; he gets good grades." Everyone nodded. But I said, "Then something is really wrong because arrogance is a learning disability. It is impossible for students to be maximizing their academic potential if they are arrogant. An arrogant person will alienate co-workers, thus limiting what he can learn from others and what he can learn from the process of creating something new in cooperation with other minds. You can't tell an arrogant person anything."

What was interesting, and is of continual interest to me, is how often in raising

## Hot Dates

Friday, November 11  
10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Tadpoles presenting

Friday, November 11  
2-3 p.m.

Quilt meeting  
Library

Tuesday, November 15  
8:30-9:30 a.m.

Quilt meeting  
Library

Tuesday, November 15  
9 a.m.

Make-up picture day

Wednesday, November 16  
4:30-5:30 p.m.

Fiesta 2006 planning meeting  
Third grade classroom

November 16-November 18

8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Library Book Fair  
Library



## Thank You!

- To Jane Seabrook for donating wine to the Holiday Book Fair and faculty/staff holiday party.
- To DJ and Anne Anderson and Bill Glenn for hosting PTTA Friday morning coffees.
- To Ann Van Gelder, Katherine Whitney and Kathleen Cologne for their super-excellent help with admission tours.
- To Georgia McNamara for donating paint to help complete the bungalow mural.
- To annual fund class captains for their outstanding leadership and enthusiasm: Jonathan Hubbard (LL), David Jasso (SF), David Klaus (TP), Patricia Buse-Ruppert (K), Nina Robin (2<sup>nd</sup>), Kim Tennis and Susi Alexander (3<sup>rd</sup>), Wini von Ehrenburg (4<sup>th</sup>), Jackie Haslam (5<sup>th</sup>), Yvelise Cabral (6<sup>th</sup>), Cindy and David Wilson (7<sup>th</sup>) and Susie Carlson (8<sup>th</sup>).
- To Anne Whitney for donating a clarinet to the music program.

children we overlook small differences that really matter, and make a big deal about differences that don't matter that much in the long run. At CDS the faculty and administration are continuing to work on keeping our focus on the things that matter.

Three summers ago when, as the new Head of Children's Day School, I was working with the faculty to begin to define admission criteria for the different grades, we made a list of these little things that we felt make a difference. We called it the ladder of success. At the younger grades there were no academic criteria; the list contains items such as:

- Makes choices
- Engages with activities
- Works well in small group without adult supervision
- Perseveres in tasks

These days a more complete list shows up on page I of students' report cards under "Disciplines of Learning." We put those items first because these are the behaviors that will make the most difference and often the habits over which a student has the most control. Any group of students will vary on any continuum of academic ability—verbal ability, quantitative ability, artistic ability, and so

on. It is not within our power to achieve academic homogeneity. We can, however, achieve significant homogeneity in approach to learning, and this, in turn, will maximize each child's academic potential over time. For instance, "Arrives on time ready to work," often brushed off as incidental, can have an important impact on performance. Also, it is usually within our power to achieve nearly 100% on attendance. Haven't we yet taken to heart Woody Allen's old saw, "80% of life is just showing up?"

The strategic planning task force on academic excellence that met frequently last year to analyze the critical elements of programmatic excellence at CDS reconfirmed that we should focus on turning out "fearless learners" who know themselves and are good at working with others. As our eighth graders do their high school shopping this fall, the feedback from the schools is that they are impressed with our students' confidence, social skills and internal love of learning. In the anxiety-laced world of high school admission, our parents and students seem to feel that they are in the driver's seat rather than wringing their hands about getting in somewhere. Success inside school and out depends on discipline; as Mel Levine likes to say, "The only thing that SAT scores predict is grades freshman year in college." (And that itself is a weak correlation.)

This year teachers are focusing energy on making sure that parents and students both know how the students are doing and are focusing on those things that really make a difference. I encourage all the parent-teacher teams to keep in touch about progress and, where there are important little differences, to talk about them right away and make a plan.

## From the Office

### Free Lunch Opportunity

Hurrah for the Annual Fund! Despite Halloween, an election and a rash of childhood illnesses, 73% of CDS families have made time in their busy lives to make a gift or pledge to the CDS Annual Fund. Thank you, fellow CDS parents!

Led by the Tadpoles at 92%, the 3rd grade at 88% and the Starfish at 83%, several classes are closing in on 100% participation. Be the first class to reach 100% and we'll arrange a free pizza lunch for the kids and teachers. Take a day off from lunch packing, please give if you haven't and keep the annual fund spirit and energy alive!

—Cindy Wilson, Parent Campaign Co-Chair

## School Wish List

### Art Department

The art department needs your old magazines, such as National Geographic, for collage projects. Please drop them off in the third floor art area. Thank you.

## Sibling Applications

Sibling application materials have been mailed to all families who notified the Office of Admission of their interest in applying for sibling admission. If you would like a sibling application, please contact Diane Larrabee, Admission Assistant, at 86I-5432, x337 [dianel@cds-sf.org](mailto:dianel@cds-sf.org). Application packets are also available at the reception desk. The deadline for sibling applications is Friday, November 18, 2005.

## Sliding Scale Tuition

The founding vision of CDS is to provide an excellent education for children in the Bay Area regardless of ability to afford tuition. Our sliding scale tuition is one of many ways we honor our core commitment to diversity. The families of approximately 40% of our students pay sliding scale tuition, making us a leader in economic diversity among independent schools in San Francisco. Financial support for the sliding scale is derived from the school's operating budget (i.e. tuition revenue and fundraising). CDS currently dedicates 24% of its operating budget to sliding scale tuition. Sliding scale tuition is available based on financial need.

If you are currently paying sliding scale tuition, you should have received an application for the 2006-07 school year. The application deadline is Thursday, December 15; families must reapply every year. If you did not receive a packet, or would like to apply for the first time this year, please contact Diane Larrabee in the Admission Office by phone (86I-5432 x337) or e-mail ([dianel@cds-sf.org](mailto:dianel@cds-sf.org)).

Also, plan to come to our sliding scale tuition workshop on Thursday, December 8 from 7-8:30 p.m. to get all of your questions answered!

## CDS K-8 Tour

Curious to see what's going on in our K-8 classrooms? After coffee on Friday, November 18, join Rick, Aimee and a few elementary and middle school parents on a CDS-parents-only tour of our K-8 classes from 8:45-10

a.m. The tour will culminate with our all-school assembly at 10 a.m. This is an excellent opportunity for you to see our K-8 classes in action. No RSVP is necessary – we hope you join us.

## Lost & Found

Lost and found items will be on display today and tomorrow during drop off and pick up. All unclaimed items will be taken to Community Thrift at the end of the day tomorrow!

## Speech Therapist

Dr. Barbara Rockman and Julie Manyak, speech therapists who have worked with CDS in the past, will be here on Tuesday, November 15 and Friday, November 18 from 9-11:30 a.m. to provide speech and language assessment to students in preschool through second grade. A permission slip and sign-up form to participate will go home in student backpacks today. The screening cost is \$35 and results will be sent home and to the school.

## Events

### Support the CDS Library... Twice!

#### Library Book Fair

"My library was dukedom large enough." William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene 2.

The second annual Library Book Fair will be held next week on November 16, 17 and 18 (Wednesday-Friday). The Fair will take place in the library from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. on each of those days. Come and see all the wonderful science, history, biography, folk tales, poetry, fiction and other types of books that you can purchase for the library.

## Go Bulldogs!

### Co-ed Volleyball Scores

November 8, CDS vs. Creative Arts

Game 1: CA 25, CDS 20

Game 2: CDS 25, CA 19

Game 3: CA 15, CDS 13

Bulldog fans, stay tuned for upcoming info about Bulldog basketball season, beginning in December. Thanks for all of your support!

## Holiday Book Fair

Need to do some holiday shopping? For you, the kids, family or friends? How about the great American novel, the best new picture books, the perfect young adult novel, the great muffin cookbook, a daring expose of the chaos of current American politics or another absurdist theater book (wait, are they one and the same?)!

The Holiday Book Fair is for you! Come join us for an evening of food, drink, superb conversation, free childcare at CDS and early shopping on Thursday, December 1 from 6-9 p.m. at Books Inc. bookstore on Market and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets. Why? Because you need a night out and 20% of all proceeds will be donated to our CDS library. See you there!

## Grandparents & Special Friends Day

Invitations have been mailed for Grandparents and Special Friends Day, which will be held this year on the morning of Wednesday, November 23. We have sent invitations to all grandparents and special friends for whom we have addresses; if your family has moved, or if you'd like to add someone to the invite list, or if you don't know whether we have your parents' contact information in our database, please contact Marion Quinones at 861-5432 x323 or [marionq@cds-sf.org](mailto:marionq@cds-sf.org). This event will include classroom visits, a greeting from Rick, mingling with other CDS grandparents and special friends and an all-school assembly to finish off the morning.

## Fiesta 2006

It's time to start planning for this year's big community-building and fundraising auction and party! We need help in lots of areas so if you are interested in participating please join us for the Fiesta 2006 planning session on Wednesday, November 16, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. in the third grade classroom.

If you have any questions, please call either Stephanie Scarpulla at (415) 999-6227 or Robin McClarren at (415) 241-0669.

## Class Quilts

The quilt group is still looking for one or two parents to spearhead their child's class quilt. We need to fill slots from the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Kindergarten and Tadpole classes.

There will be a meeting tomorrow, Friday, November 11, from 2-3 p.m. in the library. If you cannot make that meeting, another meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 15 from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the library. All questions about the scope of work, project, ideas and help available will be answered.

For questions before the meeting, call Tina Corse at 415-824-6290, or [tjcorse@comcast.net](mailto:tjcorse@comcast.net).

## PTTA Update

### Math and Science in the World

The PTTA extends a big thank you to Doug Garfinkel, Head of Middle School and middle school math/science teacher and Kirk Bell, middle school math/science teacher, for making guest appearances at this month's PTTA meeting. In their discussion, "Using math and science to make sense of the world around us – Math/science teaching in the middle school," they each described and demonstrated their philosophy and techniques for developing and cultivating passionate scientists and mathematicians to a group of captivated parents.

Kirk got the parents to participate in an experiment on the rates of water infiltration and described his spiral approach to teaching mathematics: introduce a new concept, practice using that concept, review of a recently taught concept in light of the new concept and review of a third concept using a different approach.

Doug compared his role as a math and science teacher to a music teacher. Math and science are activities that the student practices and the goals are to find the areas that the student is passionate about and to set the proper exercises that allow the student to develop the skills they need.

As part of CDS students' multi-faceted scientific experience, look forward to watching Barbie bungee jumping from the third floor balcony in coming weeks.

### Upcoming PTTA Events

- Community Building Committee Meeting: Monday, November 21, 5-6 p.m. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska (415-641-5116, [laura@sfbabyworks.com](mailto:laura@sfbabyworks.com)).
- PTTA Meeting: January 10, 2006. There will be no PTTA meeting in December. The next PTTA meeting will be January 10.

- Faculty Holiday Party: date tbd. Suggestions for possible venues should be directed to Marianne Evans at [goevansgo@yahoo.com](mailto:goevansgo@yahoo.com).

All parents are welcome at PTTA meetings. Remember that CDS is committed to parent participation and provides free childcare while parents are in meetings. Sign up at the front desk before 10 am the day of the meeting.

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, [ray@warmroom.com](mailto:ray@warmroom.com))

## Greens Available

There are still a limited number of greens available for sale that will be delivered to CDS the first week of December. Direct mail orders are no longer available; please call Susie Carlson at (415) 552-2804 to place your order. These will be sold on a first come first serve basis:

- 22" Noble fir wreath: \$24.00 (5 available)
- 28" Noble fir wreath: \$ 32.00 (2 available)
- Evergreen centerpiece: \$18.00 (5 available)
- English holly: \$8.00 (12 available)
- Door swag: \$18.00 (8 available)
- 22" Mixed evergreen wreath: \$22.00 (6 available)

Thank you for shopping to support CDS teachers and staff.

## Upcoming Dates

Friday, November 18  
Sibling applications due

Friday, November 18  
8:45-10 a.m.  
K-8 tour for CDS parents

Monday, November 21  
5-6 p.m.  
Community Building Committee meeting

Wednesday, November 23  
Grandparents & Special Friends Day  
Noon dismissal  
No extended program

Thursday, Nov. 24 & Friday, Nov. 25  
Thanksgiving break  
No school  
No extended program

Children's Day School

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Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.

Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via email