



December 1, 2005

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Losing

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

--Elizabeth Bishop

There is a moment in the movie "In Her Shoes" designed to bring tears to the eyes of an educator like me. A blind and dying old professor teaches a young woman with dyslexia to read. The improbability that a person could reach adulthood reading like a first grader even with bad schooling, dyslexia and emotional trauma was completely eclipsed for me by the dynamic between the old professor and his young attendant. In a few short sessions, the young woman lost her fear of reading. It was pretty cheesy I suppose, but I have to confess it touched me, and the theme that we have to learn how to lose in order to grow is crucial to our work of raising children.

When prospective parents visit CDS, they see happy students engaged in purposeful pursuits. They see reading, creating, writing, making, puzzling, talking, running, laughing and the apparently simple but infinitely complex activity of ultimate importance: playing. One's first impression is that these students are confident and carefree. However, we parents and teachers, zoomed in on the growth and development of an individual, know that just about every one of these children has something they worry about.

However well masked, each of these students has something to lose, a fear that some inadequacy will manifest itself. Mel Levine likes to say that all students have as their central motivation one thing: the avoidance of embarrassment. We all have something to hide because none of us comes fully equipped; perhaps it all comes together by the end of our lives, if we're lucky.

I experienced a graphic representation of this reality recently while working with the fourth grade. In their study of the brain, they considered their own unique set of strengths and weakness through the framework of Howard Gardner's eight intelligences (*Frames of Mind*, 1983). By answering a set of 56 questions, each student got a snapshot of his or her intellectual profile. The kids asked me to answer the questions for myself. It was fun and I discovered that I had to answer the questions twice, once for my profile at the age at the age of 10 and the other to get my profile today at age 60, for things had changed.

When I was in fourth grade I would have scored positive on only one of the seven elements of "verbal/linguistic" intelligence. I was afraid of books, I couldn't write well and I couldn't tell jokes or stories. By contrast my "kinetic"

Hot Dates

Tonight!

6-9 p.m.

Holiday Book Fair

Books, Inc.

2275 Market St @ 16th

Friday, December 2

10-10:15 a.m.

Friday assembly

Starfish presenting

Tuesday, December 6

6-8 p.m.

Parenting potluck

Faculty lounge

Thursday, December 8

7-8:30 p.m.

Sliding scale tuition workshop

Faculty lounge



Thank You!

- To the following people for all of their hard work on the Second Annual Library Book Fair: Ann Van Gelder, Amy Hecht, Kristen Wurz, Lisa Palmer, Leslie Edelman, Sue Barnett, Suzanne Jachinowski, Catherine Starr, Debra Levin, Susan Millhouse, Karen Randig, Robin Wander and Kim Gallagher. Because of your help, it was a great success.
- To everyone who made Grandparents and Special Friends Day so lovely, especially the preschool parents for bringing the perfect amount of tasty food and all of the fabulous parent volunteers: DJ Anderson, Kerri Anthony, Beth Mazie, Tina Leung, Jerry Liang, Debbie Jasso, Ray Cendana, Ann Van Gelder, Charles Fineberg and Kim Gallagher.
- To Olga Caid, Kate and Rich Torres, Sanlin Cory, Lisa Eltinge, Elizabeth Seirmarco, Karen Randig, Ann Van Gelder, Andrea Reynolds, Debbie Jasso, Darcy Provo, Melanie Wise, Tina Leung, Marianne Evans, Merrill Buice and Jonathan Hubbard for their wonderful help with the Admission Open House.
- To Amanda Newstetter, Ann Van Gelder, Tina Leung, Kara Schleunes, Katherine Whitney and Marion Quinones for their super-excellent help with admission tours.
- To the anonymous donors of *National Geographic* and other magazines and to Tina Corse for the donation of fabric supplies to the art department.
- To Ray Cendana for hosting Friday morning coffee.
- To Cindy Wilson for arranging for the 7th and 8th grade classes to participate in today's observance of World AIDS Day at the National AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park.

and “musical/rhythmic” intelligences were high. It was fun for me to discover that today I could answer all of the verbal linguistic questions in the affirmative and show the fourth graders that just because you are weak in a particular area of intelligence today, doesn't mean that you always will be. Today I make my living more on verbal linguistic strengths than on the strengths I possessed when I was ten.

Every child—every person—I have known is afraid of something, and usually tries to hide some frailty, some

part of him or herself which is inadequate. Very bright students are often smart enough to see an inadequacy in themselves that other people don't even see. Most of us try to hide these failings, as if we'll be better off if no one else notices.

All good educators want to have moments like that of the lucky professor in the movie. We want to tease fears out into the open so that we can help our students bypass them. In a few moments the blind professor not only saw the young person in all her self-loathing, but also knew how to help her get past her fear so that she could blossom. He heard her genius, believed in it and helped her find it.

When you have been in the business as long as I have, you have a large database of stories supporting the assertion that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. A good formula for failing is not trying for fear of losing. Often success depends on losing our defenses, “to come out of the closet” about our fears, to share them with others who will help us surpass them. Life itself is about loss because nothing is permanent. Living is a matter of getting into the process of loving and losing.

Engaging in this process is the formula for success. Avoidance of this process is a formula for disaster. As Elizabeth Bishop wrote, “so many things seem filled with the intent/to be lost that their loss is no disaster.”

From the Office

Sliding Scale Tuition Meeting

What is sliding scale tuition? Should we apply – and if so, how do we do that? Come learn more about our sliding scale tuition on Thursday, December 8 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the faculty lounge. Members of the Access and Affordability Committee – Laurance de Vries and Aimee Giles – will be on hand to answer your questions and explain how this process works. No RSVP is necessary, but if you have questions feel free to contact Aimee Giles at 861-5432 x322 or aimeeg@cds-sf.org.

Annual Fund Update

Thanks to a dream team of intrepid and creative class captains and scores of generous donors, the parent annual fund campaign is humming along as we head into the holiday/year end/tax deduction season. An impressive 80% of parents have made contributions totaling almost \$100,000, significant increases from last year. The parent goal of \$115,000 is now within sight and we hope to pass it before January 15. Pledge

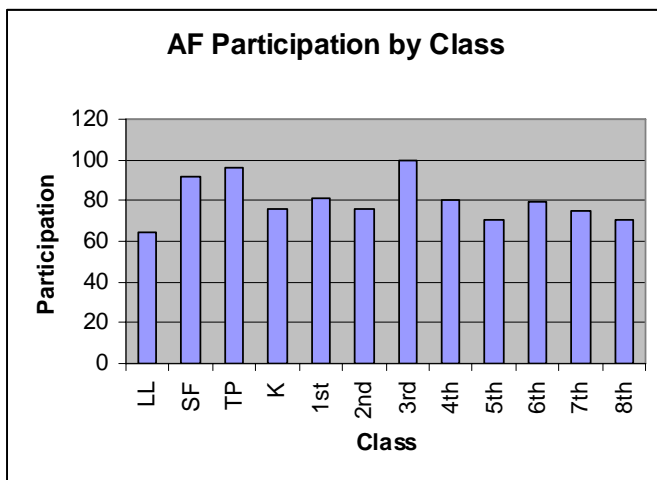
School Wish List

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.

reminder letters will be mailed next week. As usual, pledges can be paid any time until the CDS fiscal year ends on June 30, 2006, but we plan to wrap up parent solicitations this month and next and would encourage those of you who have not yet made a gift to please consider joining fellow parents in support of CDS.

Many thanks to all of you who have made this campaign a success already. Led by the unanimous third grade class, participation has truly been school-wide, as reflected in the graph below. Your collective response has been gracious, generous and enthusiastic. Please contact Marion Quinones (861-5432 x323 or marionq@cds-sf.org) if you have any questions.



Grandparents & Special Friends Day

Grandparents & Special Friends Day last week was terrific. We had approximately 100 enthusiastic guests join us for sunshine, music, greetings from Rick and Board Chair Tracy Kirkham and plenty of classroom visits. Thank you to all who attended, brought friends and family, helped with set-up, food, t-shirt and library book sales and welcomed our guests. This was a great way to kick off the holidays, and we always welcome visits from grandparents and special friends, whether or not there is an event on the calendar.

CAIS Self Study

The California Association of Independent Schools Self Study, a document designed to assist us in our accreditation process, has been completed and mailed! Teamwork is central to the CDS mission and was in full effect during this four-month process. This enormous achievement could not have been possible without the incredible contributions of parents, board members, teachers, staff and administrators. A huge thank you to the Steering Committee, “brainstormers,” writers, editors, revisers, formatters, copiers and publishers of this truly impressive document.

Last Weekly Before Break

Please note that next week’s December 8 *CDS Weekly* will be the last newsletter before our holiday break (there will be no *Weekly* on December 15). Please turn in any end-of-year submissions to maryd@cds-sf.org by Wednesday, December 7 at 8 a.m. Thank you.

From the Art Department

Middle School Artwork

Please enjoy the recent artwork from the first quarter middle school selectives classes, “Sculpture & Design” and “Inspiring Artists Today,” on display outside the library, David Minus Science Center and in the central stairwell. Thanks to the middle school students for all of their amazing creations!

“When in art, you have amazing, wonderful ideas that you don’t get when you’re not doing art!”-Avalon Qian, 5th grade

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball season is about to begin! Get out your CDS-wear and come to the first games of the season, one of which is just around the corner at the Boys & Girls Club. See you there!

Basketball Calendar

Boys: Monday, December 5, 4:15 p.m. vs. Live Oak Boys & Girls Club, 450 Guerrero St.

Girls: Thursday, December 8, 4 p.m. vs. Live Oak UCSF, 1675 Owens St.

Events

Holiday Book Fair

Please join us tonight to shop, mingle and support the CDS library at the Holiday Book Fair from 6-9 p.m. at Books Inc. bookstore on Market and 16th streets. 20% of all proceeds will benefit the CDS library. We sincerely appreciate your recent support for the library at the in-house book fair and we hope to see you again tonight!

Fiesta 2006

Last year our spring celebration and auction raised over \$80,000 for the CDS Annual Fund. We hope to hold another successful auction and fun party again this year. We are currently organizing neighborhood soliciting efforts and need your help. Businesses are always happy to give to repeat customers and we are asking families to help out by soliciting businesses in their respective neighborhoods and/or favorite establishments. We're looking for families to solicit in the Castro, West Portal, Valencia corridor, Mission district, Glen Park and beyond. E-mail Nerius Mercado at nerius@pacbell.net or call Stephanie Scarpulla at 415-999-6227 if you'd like to help out.

PTTA Update

Parenting Potluck

Some parents have expressed interest in getting together informally to discuss concerns and share advice on topics related to parenting. With the holidays around the corner, the Community Building Committee thought it would be fun (and helpful) to gather and discuss the topic, "How to get through the holidays." Topics may range from how to deal with all the gifts, good ideas for gift exchanges, an abundance of sweets, relatives, traveling, religion, familial obligations, being out of school, etc.

Parents, faculty and staff are invited to gather in the faculty lounge from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6. Childcare and food will be provided free of charge, but if you'd like to bring an appetizer or dessert, it'd be much appreciated. Please sign up with Ryan (afternoon receptionist) for childcare at the front desk or ryang@cds-sf.org by Monday, December 5.

If there's enough interest we'd like to hold these monthly with varying topics. If you have an idea or would like to present something, let us know! Each month we'll ask for a parent coordinator to help with logistics, and to kick it off, Georgia McNamara has volunteered to coordinate December's event. If you have any questions, please contact Georgia at georgia@mcmuerle.com.

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 Events

- Community Building Committee: There will be no meeting in December. The next meeting will be in January. For information about the Community Building Committee please contact Laura Pliska (415-641-5116, laura@sfbabyworks.com).
- PTTA Meeting: January 10, 2006, time and location tbd. There will be no PTTA meeting in December.

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).

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, December 15

Sliding scale tuitions applications due for returning families

Friday, December 16

11 a.m.

Winter performance

Noon dismissal

Extended program available

December 19-December 22

Holiday vacation

No school

Extended program available

December 23-January 2

Holiday vacation

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