



March 1, 2007

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### Looking at Literacy

*This week's article is guest written by Rebecca Kroll, Assistant Head of School.*

Every year on March 2, the National Education Association sponsors a "Read Across America" Day in honor of the great rhythmic writer, Dr. Seuss. Dr. Seuss' creative, colorful style of prose, filled with repetition and simple rhyme, makes reading fun and approachable for millions of children every day.

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go," Dr. Seuss tells us, and CDS kids are on board. CDS kids love learning. They are curious and dedicated and happy, and they flourish in our hands-on, project-based, constructivist curriculum. AND, like any school, there are students who struggle with concepts, or have trouble reading, or are still spelling phonetically when their classmates have moved past that stage. This is normal and natural and good, and often, no cause for concern. In this process, however, we need to make sure that everything that should be done is being done to move kids past these tough spots.

To date, teachers have used their own individual assessments and their own repertoire to "differentiate" (that's the jargon for what we do) their teaching. We have decided that both teachers and students would benefit from a more unified approach to teaching literacy. This January, Margaret, Brittany, Madora, Ginny, Paula, and parent (and assessment expert) Bettina Hohnen-Ford volunteered to join me in establishing a Literacy Work Group for this purpose. Our aim is for each teacher to have the resources at their fingertips to ensure that every child's literacy strengths are stretched and struggles are supported. This is exciting work.

Assessing a child as a reader, speller and writer is not best done by standardized multiple-choice testing, but by gathering specific data about how a child uniquely reads a leveled passage or spells words one-on-one with a teacher. We want to be able to tell parents exactly what skills and strategies their child is struggling to master, and the ones that he or she "owns" automatically. To do this, we need to establish consistent assessments that will be used at each grade level so progress can be tracked over multiple years. This information is helpful to pass on from grade to grade, so that each new teacher picks up exactly where the previous teacher left off. This transition will be smoother when we begin comparing apples with apples. The Literacy Work Group will choose the assessments that will ultimately allow us to more fully understand the way each child learns to read, write and spell. We will implement new strategies as we discuss them, and will have the assessments in place for the 2007-08 school year.

### Hot Dates

Friday, March 2  
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Third grade presenting

Friday, March 2  
4 p.m.

After school talent show  
Third floor art space

Saturday, March 3

10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Summer Camp Resource Fair  
Bill Graham Civic Auditorium

Dates also posted on CDS website  
[www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html](http://www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html)



## Thank You!

- To Nasrin and Fred Naraghi for donating an LCD projector to the middle school.
- To Ray Baxter for bringing pie to the Admission Office in celebration of the “end” of preschool admission season (mailing out preschool admission letters)!

The decision to hire a learning skills specialist is part of this project. This person will work in the classrooms to observe students, assist in the assessment of difficulties, provide teachers with new ideas and resources and communicate with parents. We are looking for someone who has been trained in the “Schools Attuned” model of Dr. Mel Levine. Some of our teachers have been trained in this model of understanding and managing learning differences. The presence of another professional with “Schools Attuned” expertise will facilitate and accelerate our teachers in the never-ending task of expanding their skill sets for differentiation and accommodation of students. Additionally, this specialist will be someone who can be an effective translator of the learning difference assessment process for parents who are new to the terminology.

The best way to celebrate Dr. Seuss’ birthday, and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication of *The Cat in the Hat*, is to read with your children. This is still the single most important thing parents can do to cultivate a joy of reading and the skills necessary to do it well. Reading to children, letting them read parts, enjoying the story together and talking about what you read, are all ways to make reading fun and empowering. Please ask your child’s teachers for reading suggestions if you want to learn more, and browse our CDS library for some great titles. We are here to enjoy the adventure of reading with each of you!

## From the Director of Diversity

### Film & Discussion Series

Attached to this week’s *Weekly* is information about a spring film and reading series titled, “Towards Racial Justice,” hosted by the Diversity and Social Justice Committee. The series will highlight issues of race through films, readings and discussion forums. Please check out the flyer or contact Charlie at [charlies@cds-sf.org](mailto:charlies@cds-sf.org) for more information. Childcare and refreshments are provided for all events.

## Transforming St. Joseph’s Hall

### Update

Plans for summer construction are being finalized; the Board will vote on Friday as to the focus of summer construction and parents will be updated soon. Look for brand new renderings of the solar screen coming soon to the first floor hallway bulletin board.

## From the Office

### Annual Fund

In addition to terrific parent participation in the annual fund, we are happy to report that teachers and staff are giving in record numbers—70% have made a pledge or donation to this year’s annual fund! Leading the way is the middle school/specialist team, with 100% participation. Many thanks to the faculty/staff team leaders who helped generate enthusiasm and friendly competition: Melanie Liu, Jim Flanigan, Eric Subido, Derrek Gerughty, Sara Switzman and Ellie Graham.

### 2005-06 Annual Report

The 2005-06 Annual Reports have been mailed. Look for your copy in your mailbox soon. In addition to wonderful pictures of last June’s graduation, there’s a great new section with alumni notes and many pages of acknowledgements to our generous donors.

## From the Classrooms

### El Salvador Evening

On Wednesday, March 7 from 6-7 p.m. in the third floor art space, Sara Switzman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Head Teacher, will talk about her international teaching experience in El Salvador and share a slideshow of her photos. Please come and feel free to bring your children or a friend. Snacks will be provided.

## Events

### Fiesta 2007

If you haven’t already, remember to RSVP and mark your calendar for this year’s Fiesta that will take place on Saturday, March 31 at St. Mary’s Cathedral. It’s sure to be a fantastic party—we look forward to seeing the entire community there!

We have secured a fabulous caterer, chef Anthony Gregg. Prior to starting his catering company, Adventures in Catering, he spent time cooking for the Bohemian Grove, W hotel, The St. Regis and many private clients. You definitely don't want to miss the delicious traditional Spanish menu; he comes with rave reviews.

## Donations

Thank you for all of the amazing donations. While the solicitation deadline has passed, if you have any additional donations, please drop them by the front desk as soon as possible so our parent volunteers can quickly get them entered into the online catalog. If you have last minute questions, please contact your class captain or Robin Wander at 415-286-3689.

## Featured Donations of the Week

- Two Hour Group Surfing Lesson: Enjoy a 2 hour group lesson with Club Ed Surf School in Santa Cruz, CA. Fellow CDS parent and avid surfer, Maria Pease, will escort the winner to Santa Cruz to provide encouragement! *Donated by Ed Guzman.*
- One Week in Andalusia, Spain: Unwind in sunny Gaucin, Spain, in one of Andalusia's beautiful "White Villages." Relax on the deck overlooking the rock of Gibraltar and the North African Coast. The house has three bedrooms and is minutes away from tapas, hikes and just a short drive from Malaga or Seville. *Donated by Rachel and Kevin Yeaman (parents of Callum Yeaman).*

Check back next week for more featured items. Also, the online catalog will go live next week!

## Childcare

Childcare will be provided free of charge again this year during the Fiesta and will be held at CDS from 6 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. If you are interested, please sign up with Ryan at the front desk by Friday, March 23. Bring pj's and sleeping bags for a fun night of movies, pizza and snacks.

Please note: as usual, childcare is available for any CDS student (grades pre-8) and any sibling in grade K-8. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate any non-CDS siblings that are preschool age or younger.

## Still Interested in Volunteering?

And last but not least, if you are interested in volunteering to help out with the Fiesta, please contact Robin McClarren or Leslie Edelman; we need people for the night of the event to help with check in and check out. Thank you to all parent volunteers.

## Extended Program News

### After School Talent Show

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual After School Talent Show will be held this Friday, March 2, at 4 p.m. in the third floor art space. Students in grades K-8 will perform; parents, preschoolers and the entire CDS community are invited to attend.

### Winter Enrichment Classes

Winter enrichment classes are winding down. Thanks to everyone who participated. Each music class is running for 9 weeks, with all other classes running for 7 weeks. Here are the dates that each class is scheduled to finish:

- Ritmo: March 5
- Tree Frog: March 5
- Beads: March 12
- Spanish: March 5
- Acrosports: March 13
- Computers: March 6
- Guitar (Tues): March 20
- Guitar (Thurs): March 13
- Chinese: March 6
- Theater: February 28
- Violin/Cello: March 21
- Taiji: March 7
- Chess: March 1
- Sewing: March 1
- Creative Dance: March 1
- Yoga: March 1

Registration packets for spring classes will be sent home with the *Weekly* on Thursday, March 8. Spring classes begin the week of March 26.

## Summer Camp

On Saturday, March 3 a city-wide Summer Resource Fair will be held at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium from 10-3 p.m. The fair is free and will include representation from over 160 camp programs.

The CDS Camp for students entering preschool and kindergarten is steadily filling up. Parents are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible as registration has officially opened for non-CDS/community families. Also, we'll be offering extended program hours from 8-9 a.m. and 5-6 p.m., in addition to the main part of the program which runs from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

## February Vacation Camp

The February Civil Rights camp was a great success. Students in all groups participated in spectacular projects that addressed the issue of civil rights. A display board will be up soon but in the meantime some highlights include preschool campers learning about Ms. Ngoc's experiences in Vietnam and China under communism and her rights as an adult there in comparison with the U.S.; kindergarten and first graders listening to civil rights songs and creating dances to go along with the lyrics and attending an African storytelling program at the Harvey Milk Library; students in grades 2-8 learning about jazz history in the Fillmore, visiting the Museum of the African Diaspora and exploring the dynamics of public art and its place in political/personal expression.

## April Vacation Camp

April vacation camp forms are being sent home with this week's *Weekly*. If you don't receive one, please pick up a copy at the front desk beginning Friday, March 2. Camp runs from April 9-13, from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. The cost is \$50/day and the deadline to sign up is Friday, March 30. The theme is "Farm and Garden" for students in grades pre-I and "Skateboarding and Urban Art" for students in grades 2-8.

## Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, March 14

6-7:30 p.m.

Hear it From Us: Perspectives of Youth  
with LGBT Parents

Sponsored by COLAGE and CDS

Monday, March 19

Professional development day

No school

No extended program

Saturday, March 31

6:30 p.m. – midnight

Fiesta 2007

St. Mary's Cathedral

1111 Gough Street

Dates also posted on CDS website  
[www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html](http://www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html)

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Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.

Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via e-mail