



September 14, 2006

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

A Learning Organization

The other day in the yard a parent very nicely and respectfully told me she was upset about something. She wasn't sure she should tell me because she didn't want to sound negative, before school had even started! She made sure to stress that she loves the school and has the highest respect for the teachers, but...

I heard her concerns (she had two) and said that she should talk to the teacher or send a friendly e-mail that simply told the truth: "I am disappointed that..." I told her to copy me so that I could know that it happened and could stand by to help if help proved necessary.

Even though the incident was simple and her feelings were simple, and even though my response and recommendation were simple, we had to go back and forth over the same territory several times because she wasn't sure that her expectations were legitimate or that her feelings were legitimate, or (I am guessing) that she wasn't sure I really wanted to hear it. When I told her for the fourth or fifth time what she should do, she said, "I know that's the theory, but..." and didn't finish the sentence. I was right. It's hard for people to believe that the other person wants to hear something "negative." It's also hard to believe that a school really wants to be a learning organization.

But we do. We want to hear everything—any information which would help us continue to do a good job for the students. We don't just want to be good; we want to be excellent. We want the CDS experience to be just right—just right for the student and for the whole family. I actually think it can be just right as long as we follow a few rules that all have to do with talking to each other honestly and openly. Everybody (well, almost everybody) wants to be treated this way, but everybody isn't sure that everybody else does, too.

A school should be a learning organization. This is a simple enough statement—so simple it ought even be a tautology; yet it is an assertion I have found necessary to make many times a year since I began running schools *way back* in 1974. The reason I have to keep making it is that the free flow of feedback—accurate information back and forth between people to help us improve our behavior—is not normal. It is professional, but not normal.

Several principles may help us get closer to our goal of being a learning organization—some of them may be counter-intuitive:

1. Give up trying to be perfect. Let's just agree that we are all going to keep making mistakes—sometimes the same ones over and over again.
2. Drop the words "positive" and "negative." Let's just tell each other the truth even if we are afraid; even if we are afraid there is some bad feeling involved.

Hot Dates

Tonight
7:30 p.m.

Film screening:
When the Levees Broke
Library

Friday, September 15
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly
Seventh grade presenting

Saturday, September 16
9 a.m.

Family Farmer Training
Farm and garden

Thursday, September 21
6 p.m.

New Parent Reception

6:15-8:30 p.m.
Back to School Night

Dates now posted on CDS website!
www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html



Thank You!

- To all who pitched in to make last Saturday's Welcome Picnic a success: classroom liaisons for arranging food; middle school students and parents for providing drinks and baked goods at the bake sale; Patrick Everett, Bill Veiga, Marianne Evans, Laura Pliska, Jeremy Bloch, Kim Nguyen Gallagher, Dirk Van Gelder, Kyle Andrew, Richard Baker and Suzanne Jachinowski for hauling and setting up; Ann Van Gelder, Tanya Schevitz, Tina Leung, Mylene Mercado, Neena Lama, Kimberly Lam and Suzanne Jachinowski for staffing the CDS gear table; Thor Muller, Alycia Freeman, Melanie Wise, Dave Wise, Dave Klaus, Patrick Everett, Laura Pliska, Jeremy Bloch and Farhad Farzaneh for cleaning up and hauling tables; and to all the CDS students and teachers who made the terrific class signs.
- To Betsy Cordes for donating a crock pot to the art department and fiber art class.

3. Don't be afraid of each other. Act as if the other person is the way we hope they are, rather than the way we are afraid they are.
4. Don't run from conflict but commit to it and work together to improve our skills in conflicting creatively.
5. Don't assume the other person is just like you. Assume they are completely different, with a different brain, different set of assumptions, different point of view, and decide that that is a good thing. In fact, decide that it is THE thing that will make school an education.
6. All these principles support the over-arching principle that we're ALL here for an education. We'll put learning ahead of being perfect, of being right, of being afraid, of winning, and of being confirmed in our own way of looking at the world.

None of this is easy, but who said excellent education is easy. What we have going for us is a Head of School who has been working at these principles for a very long time, a faculty that is committed to trying to be this way, a community of people who have created a culture which supports these principles, and most of all, we have the reality that our children really do want to grow up in this

kind of world so that they can make THAT world a little more like this one.

The faculty goes over these concepts and skills every year and we remind ourselves to practice them daily. You can count on us to want to hear "negative" feedback even though it rarely feels good, because we want to get it just right for your family and your child.

When I talked about this at the PTTA meeting on Tuesday (an excellent, well-attended gathering, by the way), one of the teachers reminded everyone that we all like to hear the "good" things too. So yes, let's not be so impressed with the challenge of delivering difficult messages that we don't remember how great it is to receive information about what we are doing right. That always feels good.

From the Office

No Shoes with Wheels

Shoes with wheels inside or attached are not allowed at CDS. Please keep these "Heelys" at home.

Transforming St. Joseph's Hall

Led by two committees, lots of work has been done over the summer to clarify the vision for St. Joseph's Hall, prioritize the school's space needs and launch a campaign to raise money for this project.

The Architects' Steering Committee has been meeting almost every week with architects from Jensen & Macy. Members of this committee are Rick Ackerly, Middle School Math/Science teacher Kirk Bell, parent Patricia Buse, Board Chair Tracy Kirkham, CDS trustees Jack Munson and Gayle Tsern Strang, both of whom are architects, and Donna Shibata, CDS Director of Finance and Operations.

The four members of the capital campaign cabinet are parents Susi Alexander and Patricia Buse and trustees John Hendrickson and Tracy Kirkham. Thanks to the hard work of these volunteers, staff, teachers and architects, we are well on our way to creating a more functional, beautiful and environmentally responsible learning space.

From the Classrooms

Seventh Grade Trip to Ashland

Please note that the dates listed on the CDS calendar for the seventh grade trip to Ashland are incorrect. The seventh graders will be on their trip from Tuesday, October 3 through Friday, October 6 (the calendar says October 2-5).

Shakespeare in the Park

Please join families from the seventh grade at SF Shakespeare in the Park's production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* this Sunday, September 12. Doug Garfinkel and family recently checked out the production and report that it's excellent. The event is in the Presidio by the main post near the intersection of Lincoln and Presidio Blvd (the Parade Ground). Families are meeting around 1 p.m. to picnic on the grass and hang out. The show starts at 2:30 p.m. Admission is free. More information can be found at www.sfshakes.org.

Events

Back to School Night

Please plan to join the CDS community for Back to School Night next Thursday, September 21. All parents new to CDS are cordially invited to a wine and cheese reception in the CDS library at 6 p.m. with Rick, members of the Board of Trustees and PTTA officers. Food and drinks will be available to all parents in the yard beginning at 6:15 p.m., and the program will begin at 6:30 with outdoor welcomes from Rick, Board Chair Tracy Kirkham, Middle School Head Doug Garfinkel and our specialist teachers. Please bring a sweater – it gets chilly!

At 7:15, parents will go to their children's classrooms to meet with teachers and get a sense of what is planned for the year. preschool–4th grade teachers will present two programs for each class, from 7:25-7:55 p.m. and from 8-8:30 p.m., to enable parents who have two children at CDS to go to both of their children's classes. If you have only one child at CDS and your child's last name starts with letters L through Z, please visit your child's classroom from 7:25 to 7:55 p.m. If your child's last name starts with letters A through K, please meet with our specialist teachers, who will be stationed in the yard to describe their programs and answer questions, and go to your child's classroom at 8 p.m.

For middle school parents logistics will be a little different. Each middle school core academic teacher will present for half an hour about their subject area. Their schedule is:

	Doug (DMSC)	Terry (B & G Club)
7:25 – 7:55	7 th grade parents	8 th grade parents
8:00 – 8:30	8 th grade parents	7 th grade parents

	Kirk (Eco Lab)	Melanie (Humanities)
7:25 – 7:55	5 th grade parents	6 th grade parents
8:00 – 8:30	6 th grade parents	5 th grade parents

This will be an evening for adults only. There will be NO childcare during the event. Please park on the street.

Extended Program News

New Sign-Out Procedure

In order to improve the safety and efficiency of the after school program, we are unveiling a new sign-out procedure. Starting Wednesday, September 20, all parents or authorized adults will sign out their student with their respective after school teacher; you will no longer sign the form to the right of the reception desk. This means that if you are picking up a third grade student, you need to sign a form that will be with the third grade after school teacher. This new system will allow us to keep better track of all students participating in the after school program and increase our ability to provide a fun and safe after school environment. An information sheet explaining new sign-out procedures will be posted by the receptionist desk starting next week. Please feel free to contact Michael Gast, After School Coordinator, with any questions (michaelg@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x329). All after school teachers are also available to help explain the new sign-out procedures.

Go Bulldogs!

Co-ed Volleyball Calendar

Monday, September 18, 4 p.m.

Live Oak, UCSF Mission Bay, 1675 Owens Street.

Come out and support the Bulldogs in their first game of the season!

Fieldtrip to Boys and Girls Club

Tomorrow evening at 5 p.m. CDS after school students in first through eighth grades will visit the Boys and Girls Club for a performance by Loco Bloco. Loco Bloco is a performing arts program for children, teens and young adults in the Mission District. They provide young people with a hands on introduction to musical, dance and theater traditions of the Americas, as well as access to express themselves on stages internationally. Loco Bloco will be performing at the Boys and Girls Club as a showcase of some of the electives they will be offering this fall at the club. The electives will include drumming, stilt walking and dance. As all CDS students are members of the Boys and Girls Club, these classes will be great opportunities for students to develop their artistic and performance skills and talent. If you'd like to pick your child up from the Boys and Girls Club, you'll still need to return to CDS to sign them out. If your child will be in after school on Friday at 5 p.m. and you would not like them to attend, please contact Michael Gast, After School Coordinator at michaelg@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x329.

Preview Enrichment Classes

Enrichment class packets are being sent home with the *Weekly* today. If you don't get one or need an extra copy, please check in at the front desk. The due date for signing up is Wednesday, September 27. Classes begin on Monday, October 2. On Thursday and Friday, September 21 and 22 from 3:30-5:30 p.m., many enrichment class teachers will be doing interactive presentations for after school program participants. This is a chance for students to learn more about the classes offered and meet the teachers. Parents are welcome to attend.

Social Justice Camp

On Monday, October 9, regular school is closed but we will be offering a camp for students in preschool-8th grade with a social justice theme. Hours are 8 a.m.-6 p.m. and the cost is \$50 for the day. Sign up sheets are being sent home with the *Weekly* today. If you don't get one or need an extra copy, please check in at the front desk.

New Student Affinity Group

CDS parent Virginia Blue will be offering an affinity group for middle school girls called Red Power! Letters to families will be sent home this week. If you don't

receive one or want an extra copy, please email Charlie at charlies@cds-sf.org.

LGBTQ Affinity Group

The next LGBTQ affinity group meeting for parents and faculty will be on Tuesday, October 24 at 7 p.m. Childcare and refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP with Ryan Gordon at ryang@cds-sf.org if you need childcare.

Movie Night

CDS will be hosting a movie night for parents, faculty and friends to view the first half of Spike Lee's new film, *When the Levees Broke*, tonight, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Unfortunately this is an adult-only event and childcare is not available. It will be held in the library. Some refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP with Charlie at charlies@cds-sf.org if you'd like to attend.

PTTA Corner

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

- Ray Baxter, PTTA President, (415) 902-0765 or ray@warmroom.com
- Patrick Everett, VP, Coordinator of Classroom Liaisons, (415) 609-4055 or patrick@everettnilsson.com
- Laura Pliska, VP, Coordinator of Welcoming Initiatives, (415) 641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com
- Michael Silver, VP, Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives, (415) 518-1803 or silvermas@aol.com
- Ann Van Gelder, VP, Parent Volunteer Coordinator, (415) 647-8561 or anndirkyg@hotmail.com
- Tanja Beck, VP, Coordinator of Events, (415) 377-8756 or tbeck@zephyrsf.com
- Yvelise Cabral, VP, Middle School Coordinator, (415) 348-1154 or yvelisecabral@msn.com
- Edwina Paschal, VP, Middle School Coordinator, (510) 499-7739 or edwinapaschal@earthlink.net

PTTA Update

Friday Coffee in the Yard

Please join CDS families every Friday from 8-9 a.m. for coffee in the yard. Grab a coffee and a donut and stick around for Friday assembly at 8:30 a.m. If you'd like to volunteer to bring coffee or donuts, sign up on the form on the bulletin board in the entrance hallway. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Silver at michael.silver@barclaysglobal.com or silvermas@aol.com. Thanks and see you in the morning!

Joining the CDS Community

The PTTA kickoff meeting for the year was held Tuesday afternoon in the third floor art space. Surrounded by the remains of the day's artwork, parents told stories of their journey to becoming volunteers and the positive impact that their involvement at CDS has had on their lives and the lives of their families.

Each of the stories was as unique as the individual who told them, but common themes emerged. Parents felt that volunteering at CDS was fun! They met new people and felt the satisfaction of belonging to the community. They made new friends and found new careers. Their presence on campus was important to their children. They knew more about what happened in their children's lives and their children knew that their parents were committed to their education and to CDS.

Parents also felt that volunteering at CDS was a chance to work on projects that were important to them and their families. The Welcoming Committee, the LGBT affinity group, Friday coffee, faculty breakfasts, and the newly reinvigorated Committee on Inclusion all arose from the actions of parent volunteers seeing a need and jumping in to fill it.

Thanks to those who shared their stories: Sara O'Malley, Michael Silver, Diane Larrabee, Tanja Beck, Patrick Everett, Marianne Evans, Tina Corse, Leslie Edelman and Ann Van Gelder.

The PTTA exists solely to strengthen the CDS community and volunteering is one important way of belonging to that community. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Ann Van Gelder or any PTTA officer.

The next PTTA meeting is Tuesday, October 10 at 4:30 p.m. Trustees Kit Land and Rick England will speak on the topic, "The Annual Fund: What is it? Why do we need it?"

Upcoming Dates

Monday, October 2
Fall enrichment classes begin

Monday, October 9
Government Holiday
No school
Extended program available

Dates now posted on CDS website!
www.cds-sf.org/news/calendar.html

Children's Day School

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