



September 20, 2007

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Genius

Genius (n): The guardian or guiding spirit of a person, place or institution.

The way to high academic achievement must pass through genius. When I high-five students in the morning, I get glimpses of that genius. After twenty years, it still continues to interest me that each child has his or her own way of doing it. There is, of course, the standard hand-at-head-level slap. Some haul off and whack my hand, some give me a friendly little tap and there is everything in between. There are those who opt for the more traditional, grown-up shake, those who decide to head my hand (maybe they are soccer players?), and the occasional child who ducks. Yesterday, one first grader decided to go around me to the other side. Children's Day School is built on the concept—and the reality—of the uniqueness of each individual.

Mel Levine, my candidate for the world's leader in the field of learning differences, has built his practice on this same idea. A pediatrician who gained expertise in learning disabilities, Dr. Levine now heads a national organization called "All Kinds of Minds." One of his consistent themes is the harm that is done by diagnosing. He says, "Go directly from description to prescription." It's one of the disciplines of a commitment to genius.

The brain is infinitely complex, and it is a very rare brain indeed that comes into the world full blown from the head of Zeus. Different parts of the brain develop at different rates in each child, and having seen over a thousand students grow from kindergarten through eighth grade, I can say with absolute confidence that all CDS children learn to read, write and solve problems with numbers, and they all get into good high schools. I know it is only a database of a thousand, but still, it is a database of a thousand.

Since the institution of "No Child Left Behind," the climate of fear around academic preparation has increased. It is counter productive. Teachers in the public schools consistently report how bad it is for students and teachers both. Sesheta Hanible, who taught here last year, called it "no child left alive" with anguish in her face.

If we say "don't diagnose" or "don't worry," we are not saying "don't do anything." I want no one to be deceived by the happy confidence with which most of our children approach their academics. We have a very challenging academic program. Students have algebra books by seventh grade, but they are learning algebra long before that. In kindergarten they learn concepts like variable, equivalency, function and the commutative property of numbers, though they may not use those words. In every class, every day, from preschool through eighth grade, students are happily focusing on challenging academic

Hot Dates

Thursday, September 20
7-8 p.m.

Middle School Forum:
High School Application Process
David Minus Science Center

Friday, September 21
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly
Eighth grade presenting

Wednesday, September 26
6:30-8 p.m.

Middle School Back-to-School Night

Thursday, September 27
5:30 p.m.

New parent reception
Faculty lounge

6:30-8:30 p.m.
Preschool and Elementary
Back-to-School Night



Thank You!

- To Luis Pena for designing a fabulous cover and groovy stickers for our new middle school planners/calendars in partnership with our eighth graders.
- To Angie Jolie, Maria Pease and Cathy Koger, Kara Schleunes and Josh Levenberg for taking photos at the All-School Welcome Picnic. Check them out at www.cds.smugmug.com.
- To everyone who came out to the Welcome Picnic last Saturday, especially the kindergarten classes for helping with set-up, clean-up and CDS wear sales, and to all the kids and teachers for the fabulous class signs.
- To PTTA officers and classroom liaisons for organizing all of the Welcome Picnic details.

work. That is what an engaged genius looks like.

Our students and teachers produce great academic results. Every year in May our students in grades 3-8 take the comprehensive test of basic skills published by the Educational Records Bureau in Princeton. All accredited California independent schools give this test. Of the ninety-nine CDS students who took the test last year, only 3 were below grade level, more than half the students were in the 90th percentile and 36 scored in the top four percent. This is one (but only one) of the reasons why our eighth graders do so well in high school placement.

Brains are different. For instance, Helen Schump, age four, has her whole life planned out to the age of eight. It includes getting a lizard and a cat named Bi-Rite by the age of seven. Her friend Paget, six months younger than she, is a whiz at puzzles. Helen doesn't know what to do with a puzzle even though her father has shown her exactly what to do. There is not just one kind of intelligence, but many, and the path to greatness includes the pursuit of unique genius.

From the Classrooms

Middle School Forum

The first middle school forum of the year will be held tonight at 7 p.m. in the David Minus Science Center and will describe the high school admission process. All middle school parents and eighth grade students are invited to attend.

From the Office

Diversity and Admission

Is diversity and inclusion at CDS an important issue for you? Admission is where it starts. Tour season starts in early October, so now is a great time to pitch in and help the CDS Admission Office with outreach. An hour or two of your time can have a big impact on CDS's ability to reach as diverse a group of applicants as possible.

What you can do:

1. **Tell your friends, neighbors, and community members** that CDS is actively trying to recruit diverse families. Host a coffee at your house to talk about CDS and/or encourage your friends to come to a CDS tour. A personal recommendation is the best way to convince families to consider CDS.

2. **Help CDS reach infant/toddler-care providers.** The Admission Office mails information about upcoming tours and open houses, and an invitation to tour CDS, to as many toddler-care facilities and preschools as possible. If we can reach centers that serve a diverse group of families, they will help us reach the families themselves. Provide the Admission Office with contact information for any childcare operators you think might benefit from a tour of CDS. Offer to have a CDS parent appear at school information nights, preschool fairs or other parent gatherings.

3. **Help CDS contact community, church or professional groups.** See if groups you belong to will allow you to post a CDS flyer on a bulletin board or put a paragraph in a newsletter. Let the Admission Office know about parent groups that might be open to a Q&A visit from a CDS parent.

4. **Help with school tours and open houses.** The best way to help potential applicants understand diversity at CDS is to meet them. Multi-racial, multi-ethnic and LGBT families will all appreciate the chance to meet and talk with parents who may share their perspectives.

CDS Yahoo Group

Our CDS Community Yahoo group is a forum for the CDS community to share information about life outside of school. Join this Yahoo group, our in-house "craigslist," by visiting: groups.yahoo.com/group/cdscommunity.

School Wish List

- The first grade class is looking for a tape recorder (or two) so students can record onto cassette tapes. Contact Robyn Moss at robym@cds-sf.org if you have one to donate.
- The middle school humanities classes need a rug or carpet in their classroom at the Boys & Girls Club. If you have one to donate please contact Terry Ashkinos at terrya@cds-sf.org.

Contact Aimee Giles (aimeeg@cds-sf.org) or Diane Larrabee (dianel@cds-sf.org) for CDS flyers, FAQs and additional guidance for outreach efforts. Thanks for your support!

Development Committee

Come one, come all to the first development committee meeting of the year on Monday, September 24 from 4-5:30 p.m. in the third floor faculty lounge. We will recap the good news from last year's Annual Fund, Fiesta 2007 and the Building Our Future capital campaign, review goals for this year and jump into planning for the 2007-08 Annual Fund campaign and parent phonathon on October 16 and 17. Parent volunteers are key to the success of the Annual Fund, and new and veteran CDS families are enthusiastically encouraged to lend a hand. If you have any questions, please contact Director of Development Marion Quinones at 861-5432 x323 or marionq@cds-sf.org.

Student Forms = Directory

This is a friendly reminder to turn your student forms in to the school office by 9 a.m. Monday, September 24 if you haven't done so already. We are planning to produce the 2007-08 School Directory the week of September 24 and need everyone's current information so that the directory can be as accurate as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

Drop-off Protocol

In order to maintain a safe and efficient morning drop-off, please make sure to follow the established drop-off protocol as stated in your *Family Handbook*. Please line up patiently behind one another as we help children get out of cars. Please remain in your vehicle at all times so the line can keep moving. There is no parking available in the parking lot for parents/caregivers in the morning as all CDS parking spots are reserved for faculty and

administrators. Families choosing to walk their children into school must park on the street and enter the school via the sidewalk along the exit (north) driveway. Please note that in order to be safe and to be good neighbors, parking in the fire lanes, driveways or spaces designated handicapped or Notre Dame Plaza (NDP) is strictly prohibited at all times, and vehicles are subject to being towed. Please drive slowly and carefully. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sibling Applications

While CDS is a family school, we are also committed to making sure CDS is the right school for each child. Therefore, CDS has an early decision process for siblings of currently enrolled CDS students and the children of faculty, staff and trustees. Sibling applications are due on October 26, 2007 and student visits will be scheduled in mid-November. New this year, decisions and notifications will be made as soon as possible after the visit, and no later than Winter Vacation; contracts will be mailed during the re-enrollment process in February. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Aimee Giles, Director of Admission & Communication, at 861-5432 x322.

Admission Volunteers Needed

If you're a CDS parent/guardian who'd like to share your enthusiasm and excitement for the school with prospective families, the Admission Office needs you! We are looking for volunteers and there are lots of opportunities to be involved, including helping with tours and open houses, calling prospective families, organizing admission materials, and more. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Diane Larrabee, Assistant Director of Admission & Communication, at dianel@cds-sf.org or at 415-861-5432 x337.

Go Bulldogs!

Co-ed Volleyball Calendar
Tuesday, September 25, 4 p.m.
CAIS, 150 Oak Street

Thursday, October 4, 4:30 p.m.
CACs, Boys & Girls Club, 450 Guerrero Street

Come support the Bulldogs in their first games of the season!

Kid Chow Lunches

Kid Chow is a lunch service that delivers healthy brown bag lunches to CDS students. Their menu features organic fruits and veggies, burritos, veggie sushi, sandwiches, pastas, rice bowls, savory hand pies, salads and more. To place lunch orders, go to their website at www.kidchow.com. If you are a new customer, click on Register/Login to register. If you are a returning customer simply log in as usual, providing your email address and password. Please don't forget to update your child's grade.

You are welcome to order lunches as often as you like; there is no set weekly minimum. Kid Chow's ordering deadline is Monday at midnight, 1 week prior to the upcoming lunch week. Kid Chow operates independently from CDS. If you have any questions, please contact Kid Chow directly at 415-830-0060 or chow@kidchow.com.

Events

Back-to-School Night

New this year, CDS will hold two Back-to-School Nights, one for parents of students in grades 5-8 on Wednesday, September 26, and a second for parents of students in grades PreK-4 on Thursday, September 27. Both nights will give teachers and specialists the opportunity to share with parents what skills and content their children will be covering during the year as well as a chance to demonstrate how the class is structured to challenge each child appropriately.

On both evenings, 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, and others. All parents will then have the opportunity to visit their children's classrooms and hear from their teachers. Wednesday's festivities will end by 8 p.m., while Thursday will run until 8:30 p.m. Please bring a sweater – it gets chilly!

On Thursday, ALL parents new to CDS are cordially invited to a pre-event wine and cheese reception in the faculty lounge at 5:30 p.m. with Rick, members of the Board of Trustees and PTTA officers.

Both Back-to-School Nights will be evenings for adults only. There will be NO childcare during the events. Please remember to park on the street.

Extended Program News

Fall Enrichment Classes

Class packets, schedules and registration information for fall enrichment classes will be sent home with students on Monday, September 24. If you don't receive a packet or need an extra copy, please check at the front desk. Classes begin on Monday, October 1, and the due date for signing up is Friday, September 28.

This year, showcase classes will be offered during extended program hours next Monday through Thursday (September 24–27) at 3:45 p.m. This is a great opportunity for students to learn more about classes offered and meet the teachers. Parents are also welcome to attend. For additional inquiries, please contact Extended Program Director, Dan Larson at danl@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x315.

PTTA Update

Involvement Forms

Please remember to fill out and turn in your parent involvement forms that were distributed with the *Weekly* last week by tomorrow, September 21. Forms can be submitted online or turned in at the reception desk. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Meeting Updates

On Tuesday afternoon 45 parents, teachers, trustees and administrators gathered in the faculty lounge for the first PTTA meeting of the year. Attendees shared their favorite moments from the first week of school. Several new preschool parents told stories of how start of school nerves manifested themselves in their family. Others spoke about the peace and comfort they felt ushering their child(ren) back into the arms of awaiting teachers and staff for another year at CDS. The room was filled with the excitement and anticipation of another school year commencing.

PTTA President, Laura Pliska (parent of first grader Iliana) introduced this year's PTTA leadership. Her primary goals for the year are to improve communication and nurture inclusion in our community. To this end, the final 15 minutes of each PTTA meeting will be reserved for feedback from attendees. In addition, she invited everyone to join the PTTA leadership at their planning meetings from 9-10 a.m. on the third Friday of the month in the faculty lounge.

PTTA Parent Involvement Coordinator, Sara O'Malley (parent of kindergartener Nora), organized a terrific group of parents, administrators and trustees who spoke about school committees and events they were passionate about and what getting involved has meant to them and their children. They emphasized how rewarding and fun it is to nurture the CDS community by getting involved and sharing ideas and concerns.

The next PTTA meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 9 from 6-7:30 p.m. Members of the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee and the Development Committee will be present to share information about the CDS Annual Fund, school finances and the parent phonathon on October 16 and 17.

PTTA Corner

Friday Morning Coffee

Come join other parents for coffee and doughnuts in the yard after Friday drop-off, 8-9 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.

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

- Laura Pliska, President, (415) 641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com
- Patrick Everett, Classroom Liaison Coordinator, (415) 609-4055 or patrick@everettnilsson.com
- Ann Van Gelder, Community Outreach Coordinator, (415) 647-8561 or anndirkvg@hotmail.com
- Michael Silver, Diversity Coordinator, (415) 203-0776 or silvermas@aol.com
- Sara O'Malley, Parent Involvement Coordinator, (415) 348-8841 or sara@omalleyhylton.com
- Karen Randig, Secretary, (415) 824-1784 or krandig@msn.com
- Tanja Beck, Middle School Representative, (415) 377-8756 or tbeck@zephyrsf.com
- Robyn Moss, Teacher Representative, (415)-861-5432 x389 or robynm@cds-sf.org

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, October 2 – Friday, October 5
Seventh grade class trip
Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon

Friday, October 5
9 a.m.
St. Joseph's Hall Open House and Celebration

Monday, October 8
Government holiday
No school
No extended program

Tuesday, October 9
6-7:30 p.m.
PTTA meeting: Annual Fund and school finances

Tuesday, October 16 & Tuesday, October 17
Annual Fund Phonathon

Thursday, October 18
Middle school forum

Thursday, October 18 & Friday, October 19
Picture Day

Monday, October 22
Professional development day
No school
No extended program

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

Children's Day School

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