



December 13, 2007

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

Today's column is guest written by Vanessa Lyons, CDS Community Based Learning Coordinator. Rick's column will return next week.

### What is Community Based Learning?

"We teach to secure the future of our students, but that future is intimately linked to the future of other people around the world—and of the earth itself." From *Rethinking Globalization: Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World*

Formerly known as service learning, community based learning at CDS focuses on the collaboration between Children's Day School and other non-profit organizations. We believe that what our children learn from these experiences validates their classroom lessons and the values of their immediate and global community.

The tenets of the CDS community based learning program are:

- Integrity: responsibility to self and others.
- Equality: recognizing each other's value and rights.
- Empathy: to foster understanding and facilitate citizen action for the future.

Through community based learning, students learn to think beyond the ideas within their own communities. They learn to examine their experiences, engage in critical reflection and relate to children everywhere.

Many classes are studying issues of displacement and access to water, food and healthcare through the lens of the United Nations Rights of the Child treaty. For example, the Dolphin kindergarten class has been collecting, counting, sorting and classifying food donations for the SF Food Bank. They collected 210 pounds of food in October alone! In the classroom, students received "paychecks" in unifix cubes and, because they had to pay rent and gas, they recognized that money for groceries was precious. When it came time to go to the doctor, they saw their money for food dwindle and were concerned for themselves and others who do not have enough money for healthcare and food.

The study of access to food in the Dolphin class helped students build literacy skills through an exercise in codification (the strategy of using pictures or signs to develop language that describes the world). Students were asked, "What do we look like when we have enough to eat?" Students responded and drew corresponding pictures:

"I feel happy and sometimes that fills me up." John

"I like to play and run." Jake

### Hot Dates

Friday, December 14  
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Leaping Lizards presenting

SST applications due

Wednesday, December 19  
11 a.m.

Winter Performance  
First Covenant/Dolores Park Church  
Noon dismissal at CDS  
Extended program available

Thursday, December 20 –  
Friday, December 21

Winter vacation  
No school  
Extended program available

Monday, December 24 – Tuesday,  
January 1

Winter vacation  
No school  
No extended program

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



## Thank You!

- To all of the many volunteers who have provided coffee, doughnuts and bagels for Friday coffee gatherings in the yard: Matthew and Luma Dahlbacka, Marianne Evans, Debbie Jasso, Keri Lehmann, Cindy McSherry-Martinez, Marion Quinones, Lydia Timken, Kate and Rich Torres, Bill Veiga and Carlos Vasquez.
- To the fabulous kindergarten families for providing another excellent faculty breakfast last week!
- To all parents who helped with admission related events over the past week: Brad Becker, Manda Ederer, James Glanville, Amy Hecht, Todd Hosfelt, Richard Hylton, Tina Leung, Nerius Mercado, Paul Moreno, Roger Nys, Laura Pliska, Janette Neves Rivera, Darya Soto, Ann Van Gelder and Tessa Wilcox.

“Excited.” Nora

“Very happy, like I have lots of energy.” Jillian

“I feel like a crazy cat.” Isabella

“I feel okay.” Raymond

“Super-happy.” Ally

“I feel like I can play soccer.” Dylan

“I feel like I have energy to play football.” Aidan

“I have more energy to play choo-choo trains.” Lucy

“I feel like I can play so much that I can even do yoga after recess.” Gavan

When the fifth grade class studied access to food, they reflected on an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* about the SF Food Bank. Questions began with, “Why are food banks and other charities not enough to feed the hungry people in this country?” Kwes’s comment, “I think we should get rid of the monetary system and have people work in exchange for goods and services,” had students engaged in ideas around bartering systems, socialism, power dynamics and greed.

When the Leaping Lizards class decided to collect blankets for homeless people, stemming from Emma’s observation of people sleeping on the ground at night, a connection with the Homeless Prenatal Program was proposed. In turn, they have asked the seventh grade class that is studying the human body to collaborate with them.

The eighth grade class has been studying homeless youth through narratives, song and film. They are hosting the toiletry collection for At the Crossroads, an organization that reaches out to homeless youth and young adults, and

have begun an ongoing collaboration that will continue throughout the year.

Community based learning, or “service learning,” has been shown to increase student comprehension of curriculum. Here at CDS, community based learning is infused throughout the curriculum so that, for example, the study of hunger is connected to the study of math (counting and weighing food). When the sixth grade class studies political movements, the rights of children are linked up with a study of child’s actions around the world through community based learning.

We believe that everyday learning at CDS is enriched by gaining experience and awareness of the lives of others and by actively making a difference in the world.

## Transforming St. Joseph’s Hall

### Big Grant News

In the last week the *Building Our Future* capital campaign has received two more terrific grant commitments – \$250,000 from a local foundation with a strong history of supporting San Francisco independent schools and \$50,000 from the Mary A. Crocker Trust, the oldest family foundation in the western U.S. Total contributions to the campaign from foundations now top half a million dollars, reflecting a great deal of confidence in Children’s Day School, its mission and the importance of the St. Joseph’s Hall renovation project. For both of these recent grants, foundation trustees visited the school, met with CDS trustees and Rick, and saw firsthand what a special place this is for kids, sheep and historic buildings. It is an honor and compliment to everyone connected with CDS to receive this kind of support from foundations, and we are very grateful for the generous commitments made by donors to this campaign.

## 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](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cdscommunity).

## From the Classrooms

### Community Event Night

Middle school students, parents and community members are invited to attend a community event night **tonight** at the Boys & Girls Club from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tonight's event will feature Pablo Paredes, a conscientious objector, speaking about his experiences in Iraq, and a potluck dinner. See you there!

## From the Office

### Weekly Distribution

As many of you may have noticed, we had some difficulty distributing the *Weekly* via e-mail during November. Our apologies for any missed newsletters! The process of installing anti-spam software at CDS inadvertently made it more difficult to send e-mails to our distribution lists. We seem to have solved the problem. If you are still having trouble receiving the *Weekly*, however, or need to update an old e-mail address, let us know by emailing [cdsweekly@cds-sf.org](mailto:cdsweekly@cds-sf.org). Thank you for your patience!

### Last Weekly of 2007

This is the last newsletter of the year. The *Weekly* will be on vacation though winter vacation and the first week of 2008 and will be published again on January 10, 2008.

## Events

### Winter Performance

Come see students perform songs about "Change," the school-wide theme of the year, at this year's Winter Performance. The performance will be held on Wednesday, December 19 at 11 a.m. at the First Covenant Church (Dolores Park Church) at 455 Dolores Street. Dismissal will take place at noon at CDS – **all parents need to walk back to CDS and sign their children out from the classrooms.** Drive-through pick-up will take place at noon, however **preschool parents must walk in to pick up their children.**

### Seasons Bleatings!

The chilly weather brings out wool sweaters and coats...and thoughts of sheep shearing at the CDS Country Fair! The Country Fair is not until next May,

but this year we're getting a head start on planning and we'd like to invite all interested parents and faculty to participate.

For those new to the school, the Country Fair is a fun, free, family event that takes place on our beautiful campus in early May. We celebrate the bounty of our campus and the talents of our children through games, tasty food, entertainment and creative crafts.

This event is planned and run entirely by the CDS community—it's a great way to meet other parents, put your creative ideas to work and learn something new. If you are interested in getting involved in the planning stages (e.g. helping decide on type of entertainment, food, booths, games), please mark your calendars for our first community-wide Country Fair planning meeting on Monday, January 14 at 4:30 p.m. We welcome everyone's input, so please join us.

If you can't make it to the meeting but have ideas or suggestions to share, have special skills to offer, or have questions, please contact this year's Country Fair Co-Chairs: Diana Hunt at [samanddi@pacbell.net](mailto:samanddi@pacbell.net) or Paige Lang at [paige\\_stover@yahoo.com](mailto:paige_stover@yahoo.com). See you in January!

## Extended Program News

### Winter Arts Festival Tomorrow

The Extended Program will be holding its first Winter Arts Festival tomorrow, December 14, from 4:30–6:30 p.m. in the west wing of St. Joseph's Hall. Visual art will be displayed, music classes will feature cello, violin and guitar performances, movie and cartoon projects will be showcased, and be sure to see the unveiling of the Acting Club's original performance. Refreshments will be provided and all members of the CDS community are encouraged to attend and support the tremendous efforts of our staff and students in the Extended Program. The performance schedule is as follows:

- 4:30: Cello/Violin
- 5:00: Acting Club play
- 5:30: Guitar

### Go Bulldogs!

The boys and girls basketball teams are busy practicing for an exciting winter season. Check back here in January for a schedule of games and winning scores!

## Winter Camp

Winter Vacation Camp will be available December 19-21. Camp begins at noon after dismissal on Wednesday, December 19 and runs until 6 p.m. Camp hours for December 20 and 21 are 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Cost is a \$40 flat fee for December 19, and \$60/day for December 20 and 21. To register, complete the attached registration form. Registration forms are due by Friday, December 14. For more information, please contact Extended Program Director Dan Larson at 861-5432 x315 or [danl@cds-sf.org](mailto:danl@cds-sf.org).

## PTTA Update

### Meeting Follow-Up

Last Thursday night, Matt Schwartz, Vice Chair of the CDS Board of Trustees and parent of a fifth grader, led a discussion with nearly 70 parents, teachers, trustees and administrators about growth and planning for the future of our school. As the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, Matt presented ideas the committee has been exploring to meet the school's need for space consistent with its mission and financial resources. A thoughtful and lively discussion followed where members of our community voiced their questions, concerns and suggestions. It was a productive evening of engaged citizens learning and problem-solving together.

Two structured meetings have been planned in January to follow up on this meeting. The next PTTA meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2008 from 6-7:30 p.m. will have a brief presentation about admissions and then further discussion and brainstorming about the topic of planning for the future of CDS. The next PTTA planning meeting on Friday, January 18 from 9-10 a.m. will be an additional opportunity for parents to express their thoughts on the topic.

### Sign Up for Friday Coffee

The volunteer sign-up sheet for Friday coffee is posted in St. Joseph's hall next to the main reception desk. Please help us continue this important CDS tradition by volunteering to bring coffee and doughnuts (or any breakfast snack) this spring. Thanks in advance for your participation!

## 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?

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

## Upcoming Dates

Monday, January 14

4:30-5:30 p.m.

Country Fair planning meeting

Faculty lounge

Monday, January 21

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed

No school

No extended program

Friday, January 25 & Saturday, January 26

“Words, Words, Words”

Kaleidoscope Theater Production

First Covenant/Dolores Park Church

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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