



March 27, 2008

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### Authority: Magic or Discipline?

On Tuesday, Claire Cohen presented a yellow silk scarf to her class. She floated it through her hands and around her neck as she sat on the floor in a circle of classmates, whom she called on to ask her questions about it. "Who gave it to you?" "What do you use it for?" "Why do you think it's so expensive?" (Nice question because it will lead the class into their study of silk worms.) Claire spoke quietly but with authority and everyone listened. Each question enhanced Claire's authority. It made her feel good to be someone who knew something that others cared about.

The symbiotic relationship between author and audience is enacted in every class in the school all day long. We all see it once a week at assembly, which ritualizes the fundamental concept underlying the CDS style of teaching and learning: learning is shared because what someone knows can be of value to others. Furthermore, others can improve one's knowledge and are powerful motivators to make sure that what one shares is worth sharing. Learning collectively minimizes the frivolous and maximizes self-confidence, collaboration and valuable learning.

When people visit the school they are impressed with the magical environment and how nice the kids are. There is no question that environment has a powerful impact on emotional state and on behavior—and we definitely have nice kids. But the deeper truth, a truth of utmost importance, is that it isn't magic, it's discipline. In another class on Tuesday, I heard a teacher in a similar circle remind a student to listen, because he might miss what his classmate was saying. The disciplines are reviewed by the class at the beginning of each year, put on the wall and pointed to when necessary as reminders. Pretty normal fare in most schools.

What is not so normal, however, and mostly invisible, are the uncommon notions required to create an atmosphere of respect, a place where it is safe to be oneself, learn, take risks, create and come up with wonderful new ideas.

One such notion is that authority should only be exercised in the service of increasing someone else's authority. If you look authority up in most dictionaries you will find that authority is almost a nasty word. It usually means "power over." In a school, for instance, the principal has the most authority, the teachers have plenty, and there might be a little left over for the kids. Authority is often viewed as a finite commodity, the sharing of which diminishes the power of the sharer. At CDS authority is infinitely enlargeable, however. The authority of the Head of School is in the service of increasing the authority of the teachers so that they can increase the authority of the students. Moreover, if we can focus the students on using their ever-increasing

### Hot Dates

Friday, May 28  
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Second grade presenting

Saturday, March 29

*Building Our Future* gatherings  
Various locations, details inside

Friday, April 4

6:30 p.m.-midnight  
Fiesta 2008  
Foreign Cinema Restaurant

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



## Thank You!

- To Rachel Herbert, owner of Dolores Park Café, for donating a delicious breakfast spread to Friday morning coffee and to Jill Linwood for facilitating such a neighborly donation.
- To Amy Hecht and Michael Fine for donating a TV and TV cart to the I6<sup>th</sup> Street building.

authority to increase the authority of their classmates, then we have caused something that might very well feel like magic.

And it is fine to say, poetically, that “it’s in the dirt” or the trees or the sheep. But truly it is because we have made a collective decision to create a different world.

Sometimes this raises the question of whether raising children in this “different world” prepares them for the rough and tumble, the push and shove, the win or lose environments of the “real” world. This very question was asked at an open house by a prospective parent last fall.

The question can and should be answered in three ways. First it can be answered in theoretical terms. If we graduate fourteen-year-olds with a sense of their own authority, a full tool kit of disciplines for handling conflict with people who might want to exercise authority at their expense, a sense of their authority not as a static thing granted to them by some mysterious force (I am smart, I am privileged, I come from a good family), but a dynamic expression of the growing self enthusiastically applied to the world, then they are being optimally prepared to face the slings and arrows that are headed their way.

A second answer comes from the graduates themselves and from the schools who accept our kids. Our 30 graduates report being not only academically prepared for high school, but also confident, risk-taking learners in the classroom, actively engaged in school. Principals of local high schools have reported such success with CDS students that they are inclined to look favorably on each CDS applicant. No surprise then, that our current eighth graders have, yet again, been accepted at a fine list of schools.

A third answer comes from our daily experience and from our gut. When we see our children grow in authority, in collaboration and in love of learning, we just know that it

doesn’t really get any better than this. So although it may not seem like much, it really is a big deal that day after day students speak up and everyone listens.

## Transforming St. Joseph’s Hall

### Party On . . . Again

If you missed the first round of *Building Our Future* gatherings, or if you’d like to stay on the party circuit and meet more CDS parents, please come to one of these informal events on Saturday, March 29:

- Patricia Buse hosting at her home in Glen Park/Noe Valley, 5-8 p.m.;
- Bill Gravitt and Lisa Wally co-hosting LGBT families at Bill’s home on Duboce Park, 6-8 p.m.;
- Gayle and Gary Strang hosting at their home in Haight Ashbury, 5-8 p.m.

The goal of each of these events is the same – to have fun with fellow CDS families and share information about this summer’s project and the *Building Our Future* campaign to fund it. Please sign up with the CDS receptionist if you’d like to take advantage of free childcare at CDS on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

## From the Classrooms

### Penny Drive

Dear CDS children and families,

Can you please bring us some more pennies for the penny drive? Pennies can be brought to the classrooms for collection. We are trying to buy a sheep for a family. Sheep provide warmth, milk and cheese for a family in need. Thanks for your help!

Love,  
Dolphin Kindergarten Class

## 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 Office

### Staff Transitions

Unlike businesses, many independent schools employ teachers and staff on year-by-year employment contracts that can be renewed each spring. This is how CDS operates and it means that behind the scenes, spring is an important time in the life of the school. It is the time of year when teachers and administrators, in consultation with Rick and Rebecca, finalize their decisions about what positions they will hold and whether or not to renew their contracts.

This means spring is also the time of the year when we start the hiring process. When an opening is confirmed, we look first to our current faculty members; changing roles within CDS can be a great opportunity for an employee to grow professionally as an educator. If we do not have an internal candidate, we post the position on our website and in many places in the community. A hiring committee led by Rebecca and made up of teachers and administrators helps to recruit, identify and interview candidates; one of our top priorities when hiring is to increase the racial diversity of our staff. Hiring recommendations are then made to Rick.

Our policy here at CDS is to announce teacher departures, hires and roles for next fall in the last *Weekly* of the school year. Teachers may choose to tell their colleagues they are leaving when the decision is made, but we try to communicate all staff transitions to the larger school community at once. Our number one priority is that each student feel safe and secure that their teachers are here for them for the remainder of the current school year. It can be distracting and detrimental to student learning (especially for the younger students) for students to be concerned about a beloved teacher not being here next year. For this reason, we ask for your patience in learning about our staff transitions, and if you hear of something through the grapevine, please don't share this information with your child yet.

We are in the process of hiring new staff for several positions here at CDS and look forward to sharing our new hires with you in the final edition of the *Weekly*.

## Events

### Fiesta 2008

#### Tickets

Raffle tickets and admission tickets are on sale this week and next. Wave to your friendly parent volunteers during morning drop-off and buy a raffle ticket (winner gets a quilt of his or her choice)! Raffle tickets are also available for purchase at the front desk.

#### Featured Items of the Week

Live auction: Plantation Farm Camp

Everyone gets to be a farm kid at Plantation Farm Camp! Two adults plus two kids will have four days of fun on this working farm. Imagine delicious locally grown food, hiking, swimming, kayaking, spinning wool and star gazing. This package is available on the weekend of Thursday, August 21 - Sunday, August 24, 2008 for a family of two adults and two children (ages 0 - 17). To learn more, visit [www.plantationcamp.com](http://www.plantationcamp.com).

Silent auction: Butterfly Ball

Boogie on over to this dance party for all ages hosted by Leslie Edelman and Jason Perkins at the beautiful Forest Hill Clubhouse. Music by parent Jason Perkins & CDS faculty, and decorations by top-notch industry stylistas (of course). Cookies, punch, and vicious grooves will be available in abundance. Specifics: 4-9 p.m., 6/7/08. First come first served for at least 50 families @ \$100/family. Don't forget to wear your wings!

#### Foreign Cinema

There are many reasons to get to Foreign Cinema on the early side next Friday night, April 4. First, the party starts at 6:30, and a limited number of cars can valet park for FREE beginning at 5:30 p.m. right outside the restaurant, which is located at 2534 Mission Street

### Go Bulldogs!

#### Futsal Scores

March 26, CDS vs. Presidio Hill  
PH 11, CDS 3

#### Futsal Calendar

Wednesday, April 2, 3:30 p.m.  
Live Oak, UCSF Mission Bay, 1675 Owens Street

between 21st and 22nd Streets. (If you valet park, please tell the attendant you are with CDS). Second, the silent auction, which features fabulous art by CDS kids, vacations, tasty wine and more, will only be open until 8 p.m. And third, food will be served in abundance as soon as guests arrive, so get there early for the best noshing opportunities. Instead of a sit down dinner this year, sumptuous hors d'oeuvres and sweets will be passed throughout the evening. There will be a cash bar, so please come equipped with cash and plastic to buy drinks of your choice and consider treating a CDS teacher as well.

### Instant Wine Cellar

We still need wine donations for the ever-popular "Instant Wine Cellar." We welcome single bottles and cases; simply fill out a donation form online or at the front desk.

### Volunteers

We would love additional volunteers to help with check out. If you can help, please contact Pat Rose at [patinsf@pacbell.net](mailto:patinsf@pacbell.net) or 415-282-9209 and sign up to lend a hand behind the scenes.

### Childcare

Childcare will be provided at CDS from 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. There will be a suggested childcare contribution of \$30 per child, but payment is not required. Advance reservations will ensure that there are enough adults on hand, so please sign up at the front desk by Friday, March 28. Bring pj's and sleeping bags for a fun night of movies, pizza and snacks.

Please note that 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.

## Country Fair...We Need Ewe!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the CDS Country Fair—Saturday, May 3 from 11–2 p.m. We need your help to make the event extra special this year!

### Hay

We need help storing bales of straw after the fair. Do you have any covered, dry storage area—in your garage, storage locker, workplace—where we could store the bales until they are needed in the farm throughout the year?

We will take care of delivery and pick-up, we just need your space! Please contact Misty at [mistyc@cds-sf.org](mailto:mistyc@cds-sf.org) or Diana Hunt at [samanddi@pacbell.net](mailto:samanddi@pacbell.net).

### Lemons

We need to squeeze! Please drop off your juicy lemons at the reception desk so that our students can make fresh lemonade for the fair.

### Farmer's Market Treats

Do you make homemade jams? Brine your own olives? Bottle homemade vinegar or sauces? We'd love to sell your family-made, non-perishable items at the Farmer's Market. Please contact Paige Lang at [paige\\_stover@yahoo.com](mailto:paige_stover@yahoo.com) if you have treats you'd like to contribute.

### Craft Booth Creations

Handmade knit hats, scarves, and other soft, cozy items are always the first items to sell-out at the Country Fair craft booth. If you want to help out, please contact Mary DeNardo at [maryd@cds-sf.org](mailto:maryd@cds-sf.org).

## Extended Program News

### Enrichment Class Update

We're currently working to complete this year's final enrichment schedule, and we are delighted to report that we have many new exciting options in the works. Developed from survey feedback, some highlights include Mandarin classes for preschool and elementary students, additional sections of Yoga and Tree Frog Treks designed for elementary students, a performing arts class led by Swivel Arts for preschoolers, Spanish conversation for elementary grades and the return of Build an Electric Guitar. Registration materials will be released on Thursday, April 3, with next week's *Weekly*, and will be accepted up through April 18. Thanks for your patience as we finalize the details in bringing aboard these new options for your students.

## Spring Break Camps

With spring break approaching, we're excited to announce the themes for camp and begin registration.

For K-8, Ms. Jasmin, Ms. Anne and Mr. Chris will lead a San Francisco Scavenger Hunt. One clue leads to another as students explore the city through field trips daring them to complete photo, food, people and supplies challenges. Students will sample various cuisines, meet exotic characters, capture city sights for their team scrapbook and collect materials for projects back at school.

In the preschool, students will revisit February's successful travels with Ms. Gloria, Ms. Gladys and Ms. Ngoc as they circle the globe (without leaving CDS) in search of games, storytelling, music and homemade tasty treats. Our itinerary for the week is as follows:

- Monday – passports, Hong Kong and dumplings
- Tuesday –El Salvador, pupusas and “La Casa del Conejo”
- Wednesday – Spain, tortillas de papas and grape juice
- Thursday – flags and Taiwan
- Friday – Brazil , lemonade, carnival masks and a parade!

Please note the attached registration forms for preschool and K-8 spring break camps. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Larson at 861-5432 x315 or [danl@cds-sf.org](mailto:danl@cds-sf.org).

## Upcoming Dates

Friday, April 4

8:30 a.m.

Cesar Chavez celebration  
Yard

Monday, April 14 – Friday, April 18

Spring vacation

No school

Extended program available

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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