



December 18, 2008

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Finding Renewal in the Storm

On May 15, 1978, I received a thank-you note that my father wrote after he returned home from his first visit to see his second granddaughter, Lizzie Ackerly, who was then three weeks old. It included the following sentence: "It was so nice to meet the person who will complete my son's education." Indeed! My four children, the sum of whose ages is now approaching 136, have been, and continue to be, an education. Knowing that this is one of their functions in the world has been most helpful. In the first place, it has made me a better father. Secondly, it has helped me properly process the pain they cause me as well as the pain that I cause them. Thirdly, seeing the job of parenting as a learning experience has made me a better person not only in the moment, but also into the future, as the lessons I learn sink in one event at a time. Finally, in the process of pursuing their genius, my children keep bringing me back to mine.

At last week's Parent Education Night concerning discipline and boundaries, we talked about the challenges of things such as getting kids to school on time, holding children to bed times, finessing "No!," preempting "No!," and handling stalemates. As we began to uncover the complexity of these daily struggles, our conversation began to shift focus. Rather than pushing to get our point across as parents (and change or stop a particular behavior), what if we listen to the child and try to understand what they are attempting to teach us? Our discussion moved to include not only setting boundaries but also being open to our own learning as parents.

Children teach us. Joining them on their journey is one of the ways we can let that education occur, and the holidays are a prime time for this kind of education. Each of us has secrets, spooks in the closet, dirt under the carpet. As we pursue our laudable adult pursuits during our waking hours we are often ignoring and avoiding our cluttered attics. We look forward to our vacations with family as down time, and the last thing we want is to face the stuff we don't want to face.

Children naturally hone in on the truth. They crave truth as much as food and love. As they make their path in the world, they do not avoid storms. In fact, if they detect trouble ahead, they have to check it out. They will ask questions about weird family members, divorce, death, and so on. Whatever we "don't talk about in our family," they will ask about, and confront us with the very thing that we don't want to talk about.

Children are on their own road. The road they are on is exactly the road they need to be on. Sometimes this road is hard for the adults. Being a parent includes joining them on their road as much as the equally critical role of

Hot Dates

Friday, December 19

11 a.m.

Winter Performance

Dolores Park Church

455 Dolores Street

Noon dismissal

Extended program available

Sliding scale tuition applications due

Monday, December 22 &

Tuesday, December 23

Winter vacation

No school

Extended program available

Wednesday, December 24 –

Friday, January 2

Winter vacation

No school

No extended program

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



Thank You!

- To Leslie Edelman for volunteering to be parent Family Farmer Coordinator.
- To Leaping Lizard parents for hosting another fabulous faculty breakfast.
- To Danielle Gutherie and Jeff Caldwell for providing coffee and breakfast treats at Friday morning coffee.
- To our great crew of Admission volunteers: Ana Brubaker, Manda Ederer, Zahra Ghayour-Kelly, Amy Hecht, Todd Hosfelt, Paige Lang, Tina Leung, Anisha Mason, Beth Mazie, Amanda Newstetter, Roger Nys, Kristen Pena, Beth Porter, Louis Schump, Lauren Schwartz, Daama Sheepo, Ann Van Gelder and Tessa Wilcox.
- To Cathy Hazlewood for donating fabric to the art department.
- To Tina Smith and Ynze Byl for donating a copy of *Gray's Anatomy: The Anatomical Basis of Clinical Practice* to the middle school science program.

teaching good behavior and setting boundaries. We must not underestimate our children. They have great antennae and are receiving all sorts of information without us even knowing it, and making their own age-appropriate sense out of it. We slough off what they want to know not only to their detriment, but also to ours.

Answer their questions seriously. Tell them the truth as you see it. Do not talk down to them. Don't sugar coat. Don't avoid using big words—they'll catch on. Don't avoid dealing with concepts that are too advanced for them; if it is too advanced they'll just store it until they are ready to understand. They will take what they need and integrate it at their level of cognitive development. They'll get back to it. Be open to the blind spots they expose in you.

Their path leads directly through emotional storms, and when the storm breaks sometimes they "behave badly." If we say: "Don't talk to me like that," and want that to be the end of it, we are avoiding the storm and could be missing an opportunity. We should at least ask ourselves what this behavior is really all about, and think of creative ways of finding out. As we respond appropriately to unwanted behavior, we can keep an eye out for lessons to

be learned. The project has at least two parts and both are equally important.

The holidays can be a time of renewal, but not necessarily a time without storms. On behalf of the entire Children's Day School community, I wish you all a wonderful time of renewal, and don't be afraid to step into the storm.

From the Office

Family Farmers Needed

We need just a few more family farmers to cover the dates listed below. All you have to do is sign up with Misty Cummings at mistyc@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x321 and you'll be trained and ready to tend the farm and garden.

- April 6-12
- August 17-21, 24-28, 31
- September 1, 5-7

Last Weekly of 2008

This is the last newsletter of the year. The *Weekly* will be on hiatus during winter vacation and will return on January 8, 2009.

Events

Winter Performance

All parents are welcome at this Friday's Winter Performance! The performance will be held at 11 a.m. at the First Covenant Church (Dolores Park Church) at 455 Dolores Street. All students will return to CDS with their teachers after the performance. Dismissal will take place at noon at CDS – all parents need to walk back to CDS and sign their children out from the classrooms. K-8 drive-through pick-up will take place at noon; however, preschool parents must walk in to pick up their children.

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.

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.

We're always looking for additional volunteers—if you're willing to sign up to bring morning sustenance, please contact Friday morning coffee coordinators Wendy Bokhorst-Heng at wdbheng@gmail.com, or Angie Jolie at ajolie@morillojolie.net.

PTTA Questions or Ideas?

- General e-mail, CDSPTTA@yahoo.com
- Laura Pliska, President, (415) 641-5116 or laura@sfbabyworks.com
- Robin McClarren, Faculty Appreciation Coordinator, (415) 235-0295 or robinmcc@speakeasy.net
- Sara O'Malley, Parent Involvement Coordinator, (415) 348-8841 or sara@omalleyhilton.com
- Karen Randig, Secretary, (415) 824-1784 or krandig@msn.com
- Andrea Reynolds, Preschool Representative, (415) 860-7556 or andrea-reynolds@sbcglobal.net
- Darya Soto, Diversity Coordinator, (415) 812-1715 or daryasoto@yahoo.com
- Carlos Vasquez, Classroom Liaison Coordinator, (415) 987-6501 or xcvasquez@aol.com

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Scores

December 16, CDS vs. Live Oak
LO 34, CDS 13

Basketball Calendar

Tuesday, January 6, 4:10 p.m.
Kittredge, Boys & Girls Club

Wednesday, January 7, 4:10 p.m.
SF School, 1601 Lane Street

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, January 13

5:30-7 p.m.

PTTA meeting: Mid-year check-in

Monday, January 19

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

No school

No extended program

Tuesday, January 20

Teacher workday

No school

No extended program

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

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