



February 5, 2009

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Releasing Genius

Last Friday, when the eighth grade led assembly about great books, each one held up a great work of literature and recited a set of profound questions that the book raised for them. Not only were they disciplined and systematic in presenting as a class, but each student had his or her own special way of presenting. Everett's little foot twist was well worth the price of admission.

Yesterday, at the boys' last basketball game of the season, Pierce moved like a hummingbird to shut down a fast break and steal the ball. Leon intercepted a pass, broke free of two yellow shirts, zig-zagged past two others, stopped in front of the net and scored with that same straight face he always has whether studying or walking back from the Boys and Girls Club. Christian didn't so much run as leap as he tirelessly and consistently thwarted the opposition. Each played his own game, but all were in service to the team.

CDS kids are so good at being themselves and simultaneously excellent at collective action. New teachers remark on it. Prospective parents are blown away, and even those of us who have been here for years derive never-ending delight from seeing it in action. What is not so obvious is the central active ingredient: minimizing the measuring up factor.

Coach Dan learned a lesson during yesterday's game. In his pep talk at the beginning of the game he dropped the fact that "This team is undefeated." Though our boys played hard, they played out of their usual rhythm, rushing a bit and unable to hit the basket; the score at the end of the first quarter was 1 to 14. It wasn't until the second quarter, when they started playing their usual disciplined, aggressive game, less inhibited by fears of measuring up, that they started coming back. The score for the last three quarters was CDS 26, Synergy 17. Each player, with his own unique play style, was integral to the second quarter comeback.

The thought that the other team was better compromised their performance. Once they got that voice of judgment out of their head, they were able to be the great team they usually are. This experience conforms to the research of Stanford psychology professor, Carol Dweck. She has shown in many different ways that thinking about ability negatively affects performance, and that our society's obsession with ability is a tragic flaw. The secret of success is to forget about ability or disability and tackle the challenge. (Read "The Secret to Raising Smart Kids" by Carol Dweck in *Scientific American*.)

Embracing a challenge is not about ability but about committing to learn the disciplines that each new challenge requires. Ralph Waldo Emerson understood the requirements-of-the-environment to be the main educator of a

Hot Dates

Friday, February 6

Parent-teacher conferences

No school

Extended program camp available

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



Thank You!

- To Laurie and Chris van Löben Sels for providing Friday morning coffee, bagels and coffee cake.
- To Patricica Buse for donating Gerolsteiner water to the school for use during all-school events.
- To our CDS admission volunteers for helping with last Saturday's prospective preschool family visit day: Akilah Bixler, Lisa Cottle, Anne Funsten, Rebecca Grey, Kristen Hall, Kristin Henry, Heather Kunz, Carlene Lim, Paul Moreno and Lauren Schwartz.

person's genius. In "Self Reliance" he wrote:

Difficulties exist to be surmounted. The great heart will no more complain of the obstructions that make success hard, than of the iron walls of the gun which hinder the shot from scattering. It was walled round with iron tube with that purpose, to give it irresistible force in one direction. A strenuous soul hates cheap successes.

But the idea that genius needs discipline is all but lost in America today. Our cultural metaphor of the last half-century has been not of iron walls but of hurdles. Opposition is a hurdle to be gotten over, rather than a constraint to be pressed against and respected. Today, the self-respecting, assertive person in the world should blow past or "blow off" the opposition and do exactly what he or she wants to do on the way to the inalienable right of happiness. Focusing on one's ability tends to make one narcissistic; it makes us focus inwardly rather than thinking what the situation requires, thinking of others and learning what we need in order to succeed.

Focusing the natural drive for self-expression and individuality on learning the disciplines required to win an athletic contest or perform a great work of music distracts one from that nasty voice that raises the question of whether or not one has the ability to measure up. Self-expression in writing requires learning the disciplines of writing. CDS teachers of mathematics know that they are teaching the disciplines of math. By the end of the month the CDS Mathematics Handbook will join the Literacy Handbook as a monument to the disciplines of a discipline.

Unleashing our genius into the world is a function of

discipline and hard work. Ironically, this helps us forget ourselves a bit and focus on the welfare of our group. When the eighth graders presented their books as a class and as unique readers, they showed us both. The Bulldogs staged their comeback against Synergy when they stopped worrying about themselves and got down to business.

From the Classrooms

From the Green Task Force

The CDS Green Task Force has been tackling a current issue at hand: waste-free lunches. Trying to rid our lunch boxes of little baggies and juice boxes and plastic wrap, we went looking for some alternatives and found the following:

- <http://store.kidskonnekt.com/>
This site has a great kid's blog with lots of information about going green.
- http://www.3greenmoms.com/Our_Products.html
- http://www.reusablebags.com/store/lunch-bags-food-containers-c-4_20.html
- <http://www.laptoplunches.com/products.html>
These things can get expensive, but they'll last a long time. This company also offers price breaks if more than one box is purchased at a time; some families may want to get together and place an order for multiples.

And here are some great food ideas for kid lunches:

- <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food/healthy/ideas-kids-school-lunches>
- http://www.thedailygreen.com/healthy-eating/6359?click=main_sr
- <http://www.wrap-n-mat.com>

Also consider packing cloth napkins instead of paper and using sandwich wraps instead of baggies or plastic wrap and a re-usable thermos for drinks. Real utensils

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.

or compostable utensils are a great way to eliminate plastic from lunches, too. Remind your hungry eaters that apple cores, bread crusts and banana peels all go in the green compost bucket at school. We aim to make it easier to be green!

Middle School News

- Last Friday, Mrs. Dora Sorrell spoke to middle school students about her experiences during WWII and her time at the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was an unbelievably moving, real-life story of tragedy, endurance and survival. Special thanks to Mrs. Sorrell and Sasha Zirulnik for making this visit a reality.
- Fifth graders recently visited their first grade buddies who opened a restaurant in their classroom. Fifth grade students were treated to elegant table-side service, hand-crafted menus and gourmet, delicious imaginary food.

From the Office

Bienvenidos Amanda

Please welcome Amanda Urena to CDS. Amanda is our new Controller in the business office. As Controller, she is responsible for the school's accounting and financial records. Amanda comes to us with over 20 years of accounting experience, including Price Waterhouse Coopers, start-up companies and small businesses. In her spare time, Amanda is studying psychology and human behavior, is an avid reader, and enjoys dancing, hiking, meditation, and learning how to play the keyboard. Amanda is also fluent in Spanish.

Amanda's email is amandau@cds-sf.org, and can also be reached at 861-5432 x316. She works part-time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Please stop by and say hello.

Family Farmers Needed

We're getting close to full farm coverage but still need a few more family farmers to cover the dates listed below. All you need 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 6-10
- August 17-21, 31
- September 1, 7

Events

Fiesta 2009

For the first time, our annual Fiesta celebration and auction fundraiser will include an online silent auction, hosted by cMarket. The online silent auction will run from Tuesday, March 10 through Wednesday, March 25 and will include the majority of donated items. (The live event on March 28 will include a smaller "best of" silent auction and live auction.) You can donate your item directly online, on our special auction site at www.cdsfiesta2009.cmarket.com. It's very easy, takes just a few minutes and instructions can be found attached to today's *Weekly*. Don't miss this great opportunity to get your donations in and help raise money for sliding scale tuition. **Please remember that donations are due (either online or on paper) by Wednesday, February 25.**

PTTA Update

Diversity and Inclusion

The PTTA and the Committee on Inclusion and Diversity invite everyone to an evening of conversation about racial, cultural and socio-economic diversity at CDS on Tuesday, February 24 from 6-8 p.m. We'll hear from the administration and faculty on what's being done to enhance and celebrate diversity in the classrooms and in our community, how these issues are handled in the curriculum and what areas we are still striving to improve. This is a chance for parents to ask questions, give feedback, and hear about opportunities to get involved.

To help guide the discussion, you can send questions in advance to Sara O'Malley at Sara@OMalleyHylton.com, or just bring them to the meeting. Pizza and childcare will be provided. Remember to sign up at the front desk by Monday, February 23 if you plan to use childcare.

Go Bulldogs!

Basketball Scores

January 29, CDS vs. Presidio Hill
CDS 30, PH 24

February 3, CDS vs. Synergy
Synergy 31, CDS 25

Basketball Calendar

The Bulldogs may be in the play-offs; check back for more details.

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

Upcoming Dates

Monday, February 16

President's Day observed
No school; no extended program

Tuesday, February 17 – Friday, February 20

February vacation
No school; extended program available

Tuesday, February 24

6-8 p.m.
Diversity and Inclusion meeting
hosted by COID and the PTTA

Monday, March 9

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

333 Dolores Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-861-5432 (ph)
415-861-5419 (fax)

www.cds-sf.org

Editor: Mary DeNardo, cdsweekly@cds-sf.org
Submissions due Wednesdays, 8 a.m.
Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via e-mail