



March 12, 2009

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Acceleration

One grandparent emailed a response to last week's *Weekly* in which he said, "I was particularly attentive to the concept of acceleration in the last two articles and would like to hear more about acceleration in academics. Part of me knows that it is not good to rush kids through higher and higher levels of achievement, but I am still tempted by the idea that it is good for my grandson to be academically advanced."

You are in good company. These days your second feeling resonates strongly in the hearts of many parents as they consider their children's chances for success. Perhaps this is a case of words causing misunderstandings. Acceleration connects in my brain to the concept of getting ahead of oneself.

In eighth grader Ethan Haslam's paper, "Impeachment Trial without the Defendant," he concludes:

Why Blagojevich continues to compare himself to great heroes and insist he's done nothing wrong is simply astounding to me. I find it interesting that politics, one of the most important businesses in the world, is more corrupt than almost any other business, especially since politics needs to be the least corrupt. I suppose the power that comes with high office can make people reckless and make them forget that, even if you're the president, bad deeds have repercussions.

Is this advanced? I guess so; Ethan is 14 years-old and writes like an adult. Acceleration? No. He arrived at this level of academic proficiency because year after year his teachers presented him with activities which challenged him to mobilize his interests, values and abilities toward accomplishing something. We've always tried to design things so that Ethan could bring all of Ethan to a situation. The ball we are keeping our eye on is his *genius*. We use an older meaning of *genius*: Ethan's spirit, his character, his calling to make something of himself, whatever his abilities or disabilities may be.

This September Ethan will be going to a great high school. Although we do not yet know which one, no one should worry (although I am sure he and his parents are a little anxious.) Someone who can write like this can also think well. It also seems fair to infer that his thoughts are connected to his feelings, his values and indeed, his whole self. This is the aim of education. Anything else is mere schooling.

Academic skills are minimum competencies for getting into the next level of education and some of them, like the ability to read and write, are important for success in the civilized world. But minimum means just that. When high

Hot Dates

Tuesday, March 10 –
Wednesday, March 25

Fiesta online silent auction is live at
www.cdsfiesta2009.cmarket.com

Friday, March 13

8-8:30 a.m.

Second grade Letters bake sale

8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly

Fourth grade presenting

7-10 p.m.

Middle school dance

Mission High school

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



Thank You!

- To Susan Chastain, Sam Hunt and Lydia Timken for hanging quilts, and to all parent quilters and CDS students for making such wonderful art to share with the community.
- To Ynze Bijl for donating soccer balls and yard equipment.
- To Tracy Kirkham and Joe Cooper, Erin and Jen Fox, Keri Lehmann, Kara Schleuners, Marion Quinones and Scotty Yaffe for providing coffee and breakfast treats for Friday coffee.
- To the Corse family for donating a glass chess set to the Making Board Games class.

schools and colleges spend more time looking at a students' writing than test scores, it is because they can see a whole person in a piece of writing. To get great results the self must not be left behind. On the contrary, the *genius* of Children's Day School is to keep the self at the center, as we challenge students with intellectually rigorous activities.

Educated people are good at handling all of the challenges that college and life throw at them. At basis, this is learning all the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual disciplines necessary to harmonize the daily dictates of one's soul with the requirements of the environment. "Top" colleges take mere academic competence as a given. They have more than enough applicants who do well on the SAT's. As they look to distinguish one from another most admission departments don't rank them academically, but look for qualities that might roughly be categorized under the concept of "character."

Therefore, the level of academic achievement of a particular student at a particular time is something to consider in the larger context of the whole child. Getting her to read faster sooner is probably not a good goal. Thinking about and making sense of what she is reading and then writing about it—at her own level of competency—is what will produce the big payoffs later.

I happened upon Mr. Kirk as he was doing report cards last month. He stopped what he was doing, looked up, and said, "Boy this girl is a model CDS student. She is exactly what we are looking for in candidates for our school."

I asked, "What's so great?"

"She eagerly tackles any challenge that I give her," he replied.

The work of Carol Dweck at Stanford (see February 5 Weekly) supports this quality as a criterion with predictive value. It's not their "native intelligence" or their level of academic proficiency that makes a difference (now or in the future), but their enthusiasm for embracing a challenge and getting down to work. Most admission departments, especially the good ones, agree with Kirk. And yet the pressures of our culture push us to accelerate our kids and act as if the most important thing is ability and current level of achievement.

In "The Crack-Up," F. Scott Fitzgerald defined a "first-rate intelligence" as "the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." In writing about gun control, Miranda Phaal, CDS class of 2010, did a good job of holding two diametrically opposed views together long enough to come up with her own age-appropriate position on the subject:

It's dangerous for everyone to own guns, but we can't ignore the constitution. And each individual's situation is different. I think that, under the current constitution, we should have strict gun control with background checks, license requirements and other precautions. But in order not to violate people's rights, people should be able to own guns if they pass certain qualifications and if there are no obvious issues.

One could call this piece of writing academically advanced, I suppose, but we helped Miranda get here not by accelerating her, but by encouraging her always to be on top of her own game.

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 and second grade students are busy juicing lemons for our famous Country Fair lemonade. After a busy class of juicing on Friday, the second grade discovered that 45 lemons yielded about 5 cups of lemon juice. So, we still need a lot more lemons. Please bring us any extra lemons from your trees at home and drop them off at the front desk. We can't have too many.

From the Classrooms

The Letters Host a Bake Sale

Last week the second grade Letters class brainstormed ways to continue their efforts in marine conservation and decided to raise money to adopt several marine mammals. The two animals they've decided to focus on are seals and manatees. To raise money, they will host a bake sale on Friday, March 13, from 8-8:30 a.m., before assembly. They are asking for a suggested \$1 donation and would appreciate participation from all members of the CDS community. Thank you for supporting the Letters fundraiser for marine mammals.

Middle School Dance

The CDS Middle School will be hosting a dance on Friday, March 13, from 7-10 p.m. at Mission High School. The cost is \$5 and students must be picked up by a parent/guardian.

From the Office

Family Farmers Needed

Don't miss a great opportunity to help out in the farm and garden during one of the dates below:

- April 8-10
- August 17-21, 31
- September 7

To sign up, contact Kelsey at kelseys@cds-sf.org.

Two Events for Parents

We're pleased to present two great opportunities for parent education in the coming weeks: Michael Gurian,

author of *Nurture the Nature* on March 23, and NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) President Pat Bassett on March 31.

Michael Gurian

On Monday, March 23, at 7 p.m. at The Greek Orthodox Cathedral (245 Valencia Street), SPEAK (Speakers for Parents Educators and Knowledge) will host Michael Gurian, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Nurture the Nature*.

Michael Gurian will talk about the latest brain research in child and adolescent development and the tools parents need to discover their child's core nature. Please contact Kate Flynn Becker (parent of Clara '13 and Gus '10) with any questions about the event or interest in getting involved with SPEAK, at k8fln@aol.com or 415-305-6625.

Pat Bassett

On Tuesday, March 31, at 7 p.m. at Mission High School, CDS and Mission High School will host NAIS President, Pat Bassett, for a talk on "The Right-Brained Future: Creating Mindsets for the 21st Century." Pat Bassett is the author of numerous articles including "Why Good Schools are Countercultural" and "Testing, Accountability, and Independence." This event is open to all CDS parents, faculty and staff, as well as local Bay Area parents and educators. If you have questions about this event, please contact Kerry Parker at kerry@cds-sf.org.

Events

Fiesta Online Auction is Live!

We're thrilled to report that the online auction is now live and open for bidding! Simply go to www.cdsfiesta2009.cmarket.com to browse, shop, bid

Go Bulldogs!

Student – Teacher Challenge

Come out and watch the middle school basketball team take on the teachers! On Tuesday, March 24 from 3:45-5 p.m. at the Boys & Girls Club, Coach Dan and Coach Jim will join fellow teachers to play the Bulldog basketball team. It's a game you won't want to miss!

and help raise money for sliding scale tuition. You'll find a wide range of items from Hawaii vacations to hand-spun wool to movie tickets to adventures with your child's teacher!

The online auction will run through Wednesday, March 25, closing before the live event on Saturday, March 28. Feel free to invite your friends and relatives to bid—all they need to do is go to the site and they too can shop in support of CDS. CDS grandparents will receive a letter this week with information about the online auction; we encourage familial and friendly bidding! New items are added daily, so check back often.

Instant Wine Cellar

One of our most popular items, the "Instant Wine Cellar," will once again be available as our raffle item this year. This item is always a steal; for the purchase of just one raffle ticket, you'll have the chance to win a wonderful array of wine that you can enjoy for years to come. In order to make this item spectacular, we need wine! You can drop off one bottle or several, either at the front desk or with Marion Quinones on the second floor of 16th Street. Don't forget to label the bottle with your name. Thanks for helping to make this item a success.

RSVP

By now you should have received an invitation in the mail. Please send in your RSVP card; we'll keep track of your name and information and when you check in on March 28, you'll receive your bidder number. We look forward to seeing you there!

Extended Program News

Summer Camp

This year we'll be holding summer camps for students in preschool through eighth grade. Registration forms for the following sessions can be found online at http://www.cds-sf.org/life_at_cds/summer.html.

- Session I: June 15-26
- Session II: June 29-July 10
- Session III: July 13-24
- Session IV: July 27-Aug 7

Upcoming Dates

Monday, March 23

7 p.m.

SPEAK event: Michael Gurian,
author of *Nurture the Nature*
The Greek Orthodox Cathedral
245 Valencia Street

Saturday, March 28

6:30-11 p.m.

Fiesta 2009

Mighty (119 Utah Street)

Tuesday, March 31

7-8:30 p.m.

"The Right-Brained Future"
Pat Bassett, NAIS President
Mission High School

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

Children's Day School

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Contact Mary to receive the Weekly via e-mail

Speak is a coalition of San Francisco K-8 Schools that have joined together to enhance parent education. Our goal: Enrich the education and learning experience for our families, our children and our communities.

SPRING
2009

Speak

SPEAKERS FOR PARENTS EDUCATORS AND KNOWLEDGE

Participating Schools

Brandeis Hillel Day School
Cathedral School for Boys
Children's Day School
The Hamlin School
Katherine Delmar Burke School
Live Oak School
Presidio Hill School
San Francisco Day School
San Francisco Friends School
The San Francisco School
Synergy School

Nurture the Nature of Children

Michael Gurian, Michael Gurian, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Nurture the Nature*, and co-founder of the Gurian Institute, talks about the latest brain research in child and adolescent development and the tools parents need to discover their child's core nature. Gurian argues that children are not blank slates to be shaped as we wish, but rather that each child has a unique temperament—with specific needs, strengths, vulnerabilities, and learning styles—that cannot be adequately supported with a one-size-fits all approach.



A researcher of brain science and gender differences, Gurian sees a disturbing trend in parents' increasing willingness to disregard their own instincts, and allowing instead media and society-driven fads to dictate the way they raise their children. Using the latest research in brain science in child and adolescent development, he provides parents with the tools they need to uncover and nurture their child's core nature—who their child really is—so each child can flourish and thrive

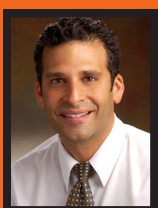
Michael Gurian is an educator, therapist, corporate consultant, and the bestselling author of twenty-five books published in twenty one languages including *The Wonder of Boys*, *Boys and Girls Learn Differently!*, *The Wonder of Girls* and *The Minds of Boys*, and *Nurture the Nature*. He has pioneered efforts to bring neuro-biology and brain research into homes, workplaces, schools and public policy.

Free and open to all parents and educators

Monday
March 23rd
7pm at the Hall of the Greek Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral
245 Valencia Street
@14th, San Francisco

Limited on-site parking is available.

Coming on November 18, 2009



Kenneth Ginsburg, M.D., author of *Raising Resilient Children and Teens*. Using humor, real-life scenarios and poignant cases, Dr. Ken Ginsburg teaches adults how to raise resilient children who can deal with stress in an increasingly complex world. His unique perspective emphasizes the developmental strengths of youth, equipping participants with skills needed to better teach kids to help themselves.

Dr. Ginsburg is a nationally recognized pediatrician specializing in Adolescent Medicine at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an associate professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He aims to start a national dialogue among parents and children of all ages to redefine perceptions of success and evaluate the significant physical and emotional damage that stress and everyday pressures can have on development. Ken seeks to create strategies to raise resilient children who are capable of dealing with life's difficulties and who learn from personal defeats. Dr. Ginsburg is the co-author of *Less Stress, More, A Parent's Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens*, and *But I'm Almost 13!: An Action Plan for Raising a Responsible Adolescent*.

The Right-Brained Future: Creating Mindsets for the 21st Century

with Patrick Bassett, NAIS President

Tuesday, March 31, 2009
3:30-5:30 p.m. (for teachers & staff)
7-8:30 p.m. (for parents)

Mission High School - Auditorium
3750 18th Street @ Dolores St., San Francisco



Patrick F. Bassett became the president of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) in August 2001. Bassett is the author of numerous book chapters and articles, including several commentary pieces in *Education Week* such as “The End of Independent Schools” (March 13, 1996), “Why Good Schools Are Countercultural” (February 6, 2002), “Testing, Accountability, and Independence” (August 19, 2002), and “Searching for Great Teachers” (February 26, 2003). He has also contributed chapters and served as a co-editor for *Looking Ahead: Independent School Issues and Answers*.

For parents and faculty of Bay Area independent schools and Mission High School
Hosted by Children’s Day School and Mission High School

Questions? Contact Kerry Parker, Assistant to the Head at Children’s Day School
(415) 861-5432 x312 or kerry@cds-sf.org

Close to MUNI routes “J” Church (18th St. @ Church)
33 Stanyan (18th St. @ Dolores), 22 Fillmore (16th St. @ Church), and BART (16th St. @ Mission)

Please consider car-pooling if you drive
Limited parking available for evening parent presentation **only**
Mission High parking lot - entrance on Dolores St.