



May 7, 2009

# THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

## Words from Rick

### The Admission Season

We had another banner year in the admission department. Despite fears that the economy would have an impact on our enrollment, most of our benchmark numbers were up significantly. In these economic times, the strength of our admission numbers speaks volumes about the demand for the type of education, as well as for the kind of school community, that CDS is delivering.

Applications have steadily increased over the last three years, and this year was no exception. We have received 292 applications for all grades to-date, as compared with 281 last year and 251 the year before. For the most part, we had strong representation of students of color in the applicant pool, and we hit the 100 mark for applications from multiracial students for the first time this year. As it stands, it looks like in 2009-10 the enrollment of students from LGBT families will hold steady at 9%, and the number of students of color will increase to 43% of our student body. The one notable exception to our success on the diversity front is attracting more African-American families. We need to keep focusing on this institutional challenge.

Thanks in part to careful budgeting and the generosity of parents, administrators and trustees, we had the funds available to support most of the families who were adversely affected by the loss of jobs and income. This helped to keep our attrition (current families who leave the school) to a minimum. The attrition number stands at 5% right now. Based on past experience it may go as high as 9% by September, or possibly even higher depending on the economy. Without the additional commitment to invest in our sliding scale tuition budget made by the Board and the school this year, this number would likely be much higher right now.

In this climate we are very pleased with these numbers. One of the hardest numbers to predict is "yield" (the percent of families who accept our invitation). Most of our peer schools experienced significant fluctuation in this number, and as a new school it is particularly difficult to predict—especially in kindergarten.

Our kindergarten yield has fluctuated by double-digit percentages in the last five years as we have shifted from one class to two. Last year we were surprised by a strong yield of 42% resulting in a record number of kindergartners (40). And this year, despite a surprisingly low preschool yield (down by 15% from last year), a down economy and the upcoming Head transition, we were even more surprised by a yield of 49%. Per our current enrollment model, we had budgeted for an enrollment of two kindergarten classes with 18 students per class for the fall. Depending on what happens between now and the first day of school, it looks like we may have two kindergarten classes with an enrollment

### Hot Dates

Friday, May 8  
8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly  
Kindergarten (Jen) presenting

Monday, May 11 – Friday, May 15  
ERB testing week – grades 3-8

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



## Thank You!

- To Amy and Thor Muller and Wendy Fountain and Don Klingbeil for bringing delicious coffee and pastries to Friday morning coffee.
- To Cathy Koger and Dave Wise for taking photos at the Country Fair. And to incoming community member Bob Concannon for putting together a Country Fair video.

of 20-24, similar to the current 2008-09 kindergarten class size.

This additional enrollment allows us to hire a full time learning skills specialist for all grades—a search to fill this position is currently under way—and to consider other personnel as necessary to insure the quality of the program. It also helps to provide the funds for the construction work that will have to be done on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street building this summer, and for hiring a professional consultant for the Head search. We are being cautious about other expenditures until we have a solid understanding of the true enrollment.

Along with the additional revenue to meet our priority needs, the higher numbers point to short-term operational issues that need to be resolved such as traffic at pick-up and drop-off and scheduling the use of the yard. The higher enrollment also increases the pressure on the long term planning and the demand for space. No surprises here, of course, and the Board and the administration have been working on short and long term solutions for quite a while now. As I reported in November, one of the top goals for the Board this year is to explore the feasibility of being a school with two sections of each grade. They will be ready to report on the results of this work come September.

A successful admission season is the result of the work of everyone in the school from the students (who are just being themselves) to our wonderful admission department of Amanda Richard, Diane Larrabee and Aimee Giles. The flexibility of the teachers and their hard work as they help us get to know the candidates are critical, and this year was a splendid year in that regard. I also want to thank, especially, our dedicated team of parent volunteers led by Ann Van Gelder. These well trained, experienced tour guides did an outstanding job of articulating our mission and methods, and our outreach callers continue to be instrumental in building the CDS community.

## From the Classrooms

### From the Green Task Force Earth-Friendly Friday Report

120 students and staff members went the extra mile to get to and from CDS in an earth-friendly way last Friday. Let's aim to beat this tally on Friday, at our next Earth-Friendly Friday!

Carpooling is far and away the most popular way we can reduce our carbon footprint on Fridays - 54 people earned "I GO GREEN - CARPOOL" stickers by doubling up with neighbors.

During this last month of school, third and fourth grade students on the Green Task Force will be helping classmates set up carpools. Sign-up sheets are attached to the large map that pinpoints almost every residence in our school directory. Students will be encouraged to ask other students in their neighborhood if they would like to set up a trial carpool for the last few weeks of the school year.

For the record, of the 120 students/staff that commuted to or from school in an earth-friendly way last Friday:

- 54 carpooled
- 29 walked
- 12 biked
- 12 took MUNI
- 5 took BART
- 2 rode scooters
- 2 skated
- 1 rode an electric bike
- 1 came in a Smart Car

Please consider joining this weekly effort to reduce the CDS carbon footprint.

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

## New policy

As an incentive, a new policy has been instituted that waives aftercare fees for students staying until the dismissal time of older carpool members.

Thanks to all who are making the extra effort to GO GREEN.

## Lincoln Essay Finalists

We're happy to report that two of our eighth graders, Ethan Haslam and Avalon Qian, are finalists in the nation-wide "Abraham Lincoln Hero Essay and Art Contest." You can read their essays on the contest website at <http://www.myhero.com/myhero/go/ecompare/view.asp?pageid=33> (located by first name in the middle school section). Out of nearly 600 essays, both were chosen for the top 25, and they each have a chance to win a trip to Springfield and Chicago, Illinois. Congratulations Ethan and Avalon!

## From the Office

### 2009-10 Tuition Payments

Just a reminder that, for families who selected the full tuition payment plan for the 2009-10 school year, tuition is due Monday, June 1. Families who selected the 10-month payment plan will have their first payment made through FACTS Tuition Management on June 5 or June 20. Monday, June 1 is also the last day that, with written notice, you may withdraw your child from the 2009-10 school year without incurring the obligation for the total tuition. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Donna Shibata, Director of Finance & Operations, at [donnas@cds-sf.org](mailto:donnas@cds-sf.org) or 861-5432 x314.

### Diversity Mission Statement

The Committee on Inclusion and Diversity has been working hard this year to draft a "Diversity Mission Statement" for CDS. Our purpose is to provide all teachers, students, parents and trustees with a documented, long-term goal for diversity and inclusion against which we design, and forever adjust, our work and interactions at CDS.

We need your help! Please read the "Diversity Mission Statement" below and reflect upon it. Does it set appropriate expectations around Diversity and Inclusion at CDS? Does it summarize what Diversity and Inclusion

mean to our work at CDS, and to our community? What's missing?

We are eager to have a discussion about your thoughts and ideas around this draft, rather than reading feedback via email. Please bring your input to our next COID meeting, or send your thoughts with someone else who is planning to attend.

The next COID meeting will be on Tuesday, May 19, from 4-6 p.m. in a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classroom at St. Joseph's Hall. At the meeting we'll discuss the mission statement, plans for next year and celebrate this year's accomplishments.

### CDS Diversity Mission Statement DRAFT

Children's Day School is committed to recognizing, learning about and understanding our differences in order to consciously create a community where everyone is safe to be themselves. We expect every individual to accept, affirm and celebrate our similarities and differences.

We understand that creating a safe, diverse learning community is an ongoing process. All members of our community are taught to use inclusive language, challenge stereotypes, stand up to discrimination and promote equity. To learn more about diversity at CDS, please see the links below. (Please note that website links are under construction).

#### *Proposed website links:*

##### Community

- Committee on Inclusion and Diversity
- Admissions
- Hiring
- Community Partnerships
- Parent Education

##### Curriculum

- Preschool
- Elementary
- Middle
- Service Learning
- Professional Development

## Family Farmer Dates

You've just seen first-hand the bounty of our farm and garden at last week's Country Fair! Here's your chance to jump in as a Family Farmer on the following dates:

- June 6, 7
- August 8, 9, 17-21, 31
- September 26, 27

Contact Kelsey Siegel at [kelseys@cds-sf.org](mailto:kelseys@cds-sf.org) to sign up.

## Class Pictures

Class pictures were a great success! Thanks to John Kraus, each class has several photo options available to view and order through the CDS smugmug website (<http://www.cds.smugmug.com/Class%20Photos/585623>). 8x10 color photos cost \$8 and can be ordered online only—many other sizes and options are also available. Smugmug will mail your order directly to your home. Please contact Aimee Giles at [aimeeg@cds-sf.org](mailto:aimeeg@cds-sf.org) if you have any questions.

## Events

### Country Fair Thanks

This past weekend proved once again what an amazing community we have here at CDS. Despite May showers, many of you came out to pitch in, have fun and make our annual Country Fair a huge success. Lucky and JoJo got their annual haircut, our organic barbeque cooked away under the drizzle, gallons of ice cream were consumed, hundreds of cupcakes eaten, games were played and many went home with art on their skin and a new insight into their future.

As always, there are so many people to thank, beginning with our fabulous co-chairs, Meredith Ashworth and Robin McClarren, for putting in many hours of organization, design and fun. A special thank you to Kristin Henry, Kristen Peña, Danielle Gutherie, Jeanette Wilmerding, Zahra Ghayour-Kelly, Jon Gilmour, Matt Ashworth, Chris Luomanen, Amanda and Brian Richard, Jason Perkins and Diana Zoller Perkins, Rebecca Kroll, Kelsey Siegel, Elizabeth McClellan, Karen Slovak, classroom liaisons and everyone who worked a shift in their class booth, helping Meredith and Robin carry out their vision.

Thank you to Kerry Parker and her band Failure to Disperse for providing our welcoming music, to Loco Bloco for getting our legs moving and to Jason Perkins and Montana-Slim-String-Band-Slim-Pickins for keeping our feet tapping throughout the day.

And finally, a shout out to all of our brave dunk tank dunkees who showed an amazing amount of school spirit: Christian Strauli, Derrek Gerughty, Rick Ackerly, Sebastian Robins, Celia Richard, Elsa Townsend, Rebecca Kroll, Terry Ashkinos, Anthony Nguyen, Amanda Stahl and Melanie Liu.

If you weren't there, or would like to re-live the day, check out this great YouTube video made by a friend of an incoming family: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHysr54bgWM>. It's a true testament to the fun that was had!

### Interested in Loco Bloco?

If any CDS parents or students are interested in participating in Loco Bloco, the drumming group that performed at the Country Fair, please talk to Kelsey or visit their web site at [www.locobloco.org](http://www.locobloco.org). They are a fabulous community organization and music group. All of their classes are FREE and many classes are located at Columbia Park Boys & Girls Club, right around the corner from CDS.

## 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. (Earth friendly tip: bring your own mug!)

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](mailto:wdbheng@gmail.com), or Angie Jolie at [ajolie@morillojolie.net](mailto:ajolie@morillojolie.net).

### 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)
- Robin McClarren, Faculty Appreciation Coordinator, (415) 235-0295 or [robinmcc@speakeasy.net](mailto:robinmcc@speakeasy.net)
- Sara O'Malley, Parent Involvement Coordinator, (415) 348-8841 or [sara@omalleyhylton.com](mailto:sara@omalleyhylton.com)
- Karen Randig, Secretary, (415) 824-1784 or [krandig@msn.com](mailto:krandig@msn.com)
- Andrea Reynolds, Preschool Representative, (415) 860-7556 or [andrea-reynolds@sbcglobal.net](mailto:andrea-reynolds@sbcglobal.net)
- Darya Soto, Diversity Coordinator, (415) 812-1715 or [daryasoto@yahoo.com](mailto:daryasoto@yahoo.com)
- Carlos Vasquez, Classroom Liaison Coordinator, (415) 987-6501 or [xcvasquez@aol.com](mailto:xcvasquez@aol.com)

## Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, May 19

4-6 p.m.

Committee on Inclusion and Diversity meeting

Friday, May 22 & Saturday, May 23

Shakespeare performances

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day observed

No school

No extended program

Friday, May 29

9-10 a.m.

Step-Up Day

Monday, June 1

Last day that, with written notice, you may withdraw your child from the 2009-10 school year without incurring the obligation for the total tuition

Tuesday, June 9

3:45-5 p.m.

Eighth grade graduation

Last day of school

Dates also posted on CDS website  
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