



October 2, 2008

THE CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL Weekly

Words from Rick

Getting Our Kids to Talk

"How was school today?"

"Fine."

"What did you do?"

"Stuff."

Parents often complain that they can't get their child to talk about what went on in school. Others feel lucky that they "have one who likes to share their experience," but the former is much more common.

When our children go off to school, responsibility must progressively shift from parents to students so that the child will increasingly take responsibility for their own education. Ownership is the main predictor of success. This taking on of responsibility happens quite naturally. When they walk in the gate of the school, they enter another country, a world of their own; it's a natural process.

The boundary between their two countries can be more or less permeable, and if home and school both play their cards right this boundary can be quite a friendly border, and this is usually the case. But that doesn't mean the boundary ever goes away; nor should it. Respecting this boundary is one of the essential ways of respecting your child's autonomy. It is quite fair for children to say in their own way, "Mom, Dad, this is my world, do not intrude." When I was raising two girls in New York ages ago, our small apartment had one and a half bathrooms. At the beginning of second grade, our daughter Lizzie wrote two signs and put one on each door: one said "KIDS" and the other said "GROANUPS."

One of the most important jobs we have as parents is to let our children go off to school and let it be their own school. This is not to say parents should stay away or not get involved or not ask questions about what happens on the other side of those walls. The boundary is not a physical boundary but a psychological one. Parents and students come to the same assembly on Friday and we all experience the same phenomena. It's just that the students in their circles are in a different world from the adults around the outside. It all happens so naturally. Deep down, most of us honor the two worlds without even thinking, most of the time.

Some students are talkers, some are not so good with words. Some want to share; others have a stronger need to keep their own world to themselves. Each of us needs a place of our own into which others should not pry. Nevertheless, this does not mean communication between the two worlds needs to break down—it must not. As they approach the teen years they will want to say in a

Hot Dates

Thursday, October 2

6-8 p.m.

St. Joseph's Hall Party
& VP debate viewing

Friday, October 3

8:30 a.m.

Friday assembly
Fifth grade presenting

Monday, October 6

3-4:30 p.m.

Development Committee meeting
Second floor, 16th Street building

Tuesday, October 7

3:30 p.m.

Green Task Force meeting
Second floor, 16th Street building

5:30-7 p.m.

PTTA meeting: CDS Finances &
Annual Fund

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



Thank You!

- To Angie Jolie and Cathy Koger for taking pictures at the all-school Kick-Off Picnic on September 13. View Angie and Cathy's pictures online at http://www.cds.smugmug.com/gallery/5865506_swopm#380856770_cyDWd.
- To Joanne Prior, Tina Corse and Karen Levesque for bringing coffee and baked goods to last week's Friday morning coffee.
- To the fabulous team of volunteers who helped collate and stuff admission and sliding scale tuition packets: Meredith Ashworth, Akilah Bixler, Ray Cendana, Amy Hecht, Paige Lang, Michelle Lapuz, Jeannette Layden, Lida Morgenstein, Janette Neves Rivera, Laura Pliska, Elizabeth Seirmarco and Carlos Vasquez.
- To Poppea Dorsam and Ted Dagnese for leading the project to have a mirror installed on the Dolores Street median. We can all exit much more safely now!
- To Tjasa Owen for donating two Nikon cameras to the middle school selectives photography class.

variety of ways, "Get out of my life." Parents must brace themselves for that message and accept it willingly; at the same time we must not take it literally and totally. It is a statement about a shift in emphasis. They actually need and want us to be in their lives even more deeply; they just want us to do it in new ways, ways that reflect their higher level of maturity and competence.

Communication between the two worlds can be facilitated by specificity. The newsletters that the teachers send home can help you add specificity to your questions. As you read them, you can come up with clever questions:

"What did you notice about caterpillars today?"

"Which math center did you work in today?"

"Did you get a new book today?"

"Oh, so you finished Puddles. How did it end?"

"What did you learn about seeds today?"

You might get really clever and make a statement instead of a question: "Hey, look: a pattern!" (You'll be helping us teach algebra.)

Compared to specific questions like those above, "What was the best thing that happened at school today?" seems rather pedestrian, but that's okay. Some parents have

found that this question works quite well, too.

Getting our children to talk about their world is an art, not a science. Part of the art is a matter of timing. Maybe, "How was school today?" is not only not the best line, but also, perhaps not the question to pop the moment your child is climbing into the car. Maybe, on your way to school in the morning is a better time to ask, "What are you looking forward to today?" This might give you something to talk about over dinner.

Years ago, when my step-daughter Lizzie was young, my wife Victoria established an excellent bedtime ritual. At the end of the day when Lizzie was in bed with teeth brushed and PJ's on, she would sit on the bed and read to her. She did it every night. This reading time morphed into talking time. One night, when Lizzie was eight, as I was walking by the door of her room I heard: "Mom, can this be one of those times when I can tell you anything and you won't get mad?" This ritual is one of the main reasons Lizzie still goes to her mom for advice, even though she is a junior in high school.

Transforming St. Joseph's Hall

Celebrate St. Joseph's Hall AND Watch the VP Debate

Come early to the St. Joseph's Hall party tonight if you'd like to watch the vice presidential debate here at school. We'll turn on the TV (warning: an old school analog TV) in the middle school Spanish classroom on the 3rd floor of St. Joseph's Hall at 6 p.m., and the party will start at 6:30 down the hall in Terry Ashkinos' 7th/8th grade humanities classroom. Feel free to grab refreshments and watch the debate with parents and friends, and please make every effort to keep the debate viewing respectful and non-partisan. We're hoping that people in both rooms will converge at about 7 p.m. in Terry's classroom for a quick presentation and a toast to successful renovation projects past and future. Childcare will be available starting at 6 p.m. for debate-viewing, through the 8 p.m. end of the St. Joseph's Hall celebration. Come one, come all.

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.

From the Office

Annual Fund Volunteers Needed

The Development Committee welcomes all parents who would be interested in helping with the Annual Fund, serving as a class captain or volunteering to make calls during the parent phonathon (6-9 p.m. on October 21 and 22) to come to the first Development Committee meeting of the year on Monday, October 6 from 3-4:30 p.m. Encouraging support for the Annual Fund with fellow parent and trustee volunteers is a satisfying and fun way to connect with other parents and make a tangible difference to the school and the people and programs that make it special. Even if you can commit only one evening to serve as a volunteer, we're very happy to have your help. We'll meet on Monday to plan and train for the phonathon and the Annual Fund campaign in the 16th Street meeting room (second floor). If you have any questions, please contact Marion Quinones, Director of Development, at marionq@cds-sf.org or 861-5432 x323.

Sliding Scale Tuition

The founding vision of CDS is to provide an excellent education for children in the Bay Area regardless of the ability to afford tuition. Our sliding scale tuition is one of many ways we honor our core commitment to diversity. Sliding scale tuition is available based on financial need. Recognizing that many families who might not expect to be eligible for "financial aid" may still qualify for our sliding scale tuition, we highly encourage families who have concerns about their ability to afford full tuition to apply for sliding scale tuition.

If you are currently paying sliding scale tuition, an application for the 2009-10 school year will be mailed to you next week. This year's application deadline is Friday, December 19; families must reapply every year. If you do not receive a packet or would like to apply for the first time, please contact Aimee Giles at 861-5432 x322 or aimeeg@cds-sf.org.

To learn more about our sliding scale tuition, plan to attend our sliding scale tuition workshop on Tuesday, December 9, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Photo Day

Please note that this year's individual photo days will be held on Wednesday, October 15 and Thursday, October 16. Stay tuned for further details.

Join the Green Task Force

The first monthly meeting of the Green Task Force will be held on Tuesday, October 7 at 3:30 p.m. in the second floor meeting room of the 16th Street building. All parents and teachers, and students in third through eighth grades, are welcome to join us. Please RSVP to Misty Cummings at mistyc@cds-sf.org if you plan to attend; pre-meeting information will be sent out.

Events

Fiesta 2009 Class Quilts

CDS has a proud tradition of making class quilts each year which are displayed at the school, photographed for a school poster, and then auctioned off at our annual Fiesta fundraiser party in March. Each class needs parents to help the kids get the ball rolling with their inspirations, designs and artwork. If you can handle a pair of scissors you're qualified!

Come to our quilters meeting tomorrow, October 3 at 9 a.m. on the third floor faculty lounge in the new 16th Street building to find out how you can help. For more information, contact Susan Chastain, our quilting maven, at susan@susanchastain.com.

PTTA Update

Upcoming Meeting: CDS Finances & Annual Fund

Please join us next Tuesday, October 7 from 5:30-7 p.m. in the middle school humanities classroom on the third floor of St. Joseph's Hall for a PTTA meeting about CDS finances, fundraising and the upcoming Annual Fund phonathon. Members of the Board of Trustees will

Go Bulldogs!

Co-ed Volleyball Calendar

Monday, October 6, 3:30 p.m.
KDDBS, 7000 California Street

Friday, October 10, 3:45 p.m.
CAIS, 150 Oak Street

Tuesday, October 14, 4 p.m.
Lycee Francais, 20th and Ortega Streets

Thursday, October 16, 4:10 p.m.
KDDBS, Boys & Girls Club

give an overview of the CDS financial framework including the budgeting process and development efforts. Will tuition increase? How can we, as parents, help minimize tuition? What are some of the budget questions the finance committee struggles with? How can we best utilize our connections to foundations? Is there value in donating \$5 to the annual fund if that's all you can afford? We hope to answer these and other questions.

Childcare is available for any CDS student (pre-8) and any sibling in grade K-8. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate any non-CDS siblings that are preschool age or younger. To sign up for childcare, please contact Ryan Lambert at ryanl@cds-sf.org by the end of the day Friday.

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.

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@omalleyhylton.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, October 13

Government holiday observed

No school

No extended program

Tuesday, October 21 & Wednesday, October 22

Annual Fund Phonathon

Friday, October 24

Sibling application deadline

Saturday, October 25

12-2 p.m.

Alumni Reunion & High School Roundtable

Monday, October 27

Professional development day

No school

No extended program

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

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