



May 8, 2020: Friday Note from Shelly

Dear CDS Community,

It's been a busy week for everyone, and I'm so happy to see the outpouring of appreciation and love shown for our incredible teachers. They have been humbled by the support of our community.

There were also some bittersweet moments this week, with two CDS traditions that normally take place at this time taking a back seat. Today, the 8th grade would have been flying home from their annual trip to Washington, D.C. Still, a few days ago, the soon-to-be graduates had a very productive Zoom meeting with Robert Edmonson, the Chief of Staff for Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Their dialogue was deep and authentic, and left the students even more inspired to be changemakers for their community and country. Secondly, tomorrow would have been our always fun Country Fair. We hope that this morning's assembly with live footage of the sheep shearing, while not the same as being there, at least provided a warm glimpse of that great spirit that is CDS.

We value your ongoing feedback, and we have sent out a brief anonymous survey to track your experience with online/home learning (OHL) during the extended campus closure. Data from this survey will allow us to assess how well we are communicating with you, listening to your experience, and supporting you with OHL. The survey should take just 1 to 3 minutes to complete. It will close Monday evening.

I recently read a blog post by Kevin Kelly written to celebrate his 68th birthday with 68 pieces of unsolicited advice. Twenty-five years ago, he began to impact me and my thinking about the world when he founded *Wired Magazine*. This, along with *Popular Science* and the occasional travel magazine when I fly, has been a staple of my adult magazine reading experiences. Even when I was younger, I enjoyed reading another of Kevin's projects: the *Whole Earth*

Catalogues tucked into neat(ish) piles behind my father's chair as I was growing up.

All of his advice resonated in some way, and a few of his suggestions struck me in particular ways:

- “Being enthusiastic is worth 25 IQ points” and “Over the long term, the future is decided by optimists. To be an optimist you don't have to ignore all the many problems we create, you just have to imagine improving our capacity to solve problems.”

Over my career and personal life, I have consciously looked for ways to be enthusiastic by asking questions and bringing genuine engagement and optimism. This has initiated many interesting conversations, scenarios, and adventures as enthusiasm has led me to learn things quickly and say yes to figuring out new things again and again. Part of what I love about the CDS community is the deep enthusiasm and optimism we see every day.

Kevin also speaks about generosity in a number of his advice snippets:

- “Optimize your generosity. No one on their deathbed has ever regretted giving too much away” and “Perhaps the most counter-intuitive truth of the universe is that the more you give to others, the more you'll get. Understanding this is the basis of wisdom.” The final one in this category is “Treating a person to a meal never fails, and it is so easy to do. It's powerful with old friends and a great way to make new friends.”

The generosity of our community is so obvious and I see it show up again and again in how individuals rally around causes and work to find solutions to challenges by coming together. When I was a teacher I benefited many times from friends buying me a meal, and a mentor once said that he was “always up for taking a teacher to lunch.” That has stuck with me as I think about ways I can support those who have less. We can all find someone who might benefit from our support.

Learning and looking toward the future is a theme for Kevin as well. He suggests we should:

- “Learn how to learn from those you disagree with, or even offend you. See if you can find the truth in what they believe” and “A worthy goal for a year

is to learn enough about a subject so that you can't believe how ignorant you were a year earlier."

I think this shows how curiosity and a learner stance can bring benefits to all aspects of our lives. Young children are masters of the deep dive as they, again and again, find something interesting and gather as much information as possible. I think about how much I still know about trains, vehicles, and even Pokemon after supporting the deep dives of my children.

There are also gems of practicality that made me laugh at the simplicity and the lesson:

- "If you look for something in your house, and you finally find it, when you're done with it, don't put it back where you found it. Put it back in the first place you looked for it."

Today, one piece of advice gives a perspective of what we can learn from our current situation:

- "When crisis and disaster strike, don't waste them. No problems, no progress."

All of the current conversations at CDS have a practical focus on the present and include the questions "What can we learn?" and "What practices/protocols and procedures should carry forward when things are back to our typical in-person life?" Essentially, what have we learned about doing things better?

I could not end this appreciation of Kevin's advice without celebrating one of my all-time favorites:

- "Reading to your children regularly will bond you together and kick start their imaginations."

What are you reading? Some favorites from our family storytime are *Mercy Watson*; the *13-Story Treehouse* series; and *Once, Then, and Now* and their sequels (there are six books in this series). For older readers, there is *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi and the recent favorite is *On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas.

Feel free to explore [Kevin Kelly's wisdom](#) yourself to see if there is anything that resonates.

I also welcome you to join me as I run 2.23 miles today [in honor of Ahmaud Arbery](#). This is an important moment to come together and individually create collective action and awareness.

Lastly, I plan to host another Town Hall on Wednesday, May 20. In advance of that meeting, I will be sharing some details about what the next school year might look like. We have learned so much these past few months about what we can and cannot do and what is possible. Similar to one of the Kevin Kelly nuggets above, I do believe that out of crisis comes opportunity. As summer approaches and we plan for the fall, these three things are always top of mind for us: ensuring the health and safety of our entire community, maintaining academic continuity, and delivering the full CDS experience as it always has been.

Warmly,
Shelly