



## January 21, 2020: A Weekend of Growth and Inspiration

Dear CDS Community,

This weekend was packed. Saturday was filled with the promise of growth, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees as the sidewalks around the middle school were planted with a variety of native plants. This work was an opportunity to connect with the neighbors along Dolores Street and down Cumberland Street as we worked together with Friends of the Urban Forest to add green space to our blocks.

This project was months in planning and offered us all the chance to learn together as we explored plants, talked to each other about hydration, and then planned the day of planting. A few CDS community members joined us, but most of the planting was done by volunteers from the neighborhood and local schools. I was deeply impressed by the students from Lowell High School's Interact club who, all day long, were dedicated, hard-working, and collaborative. They reminded me of the high school students I have worked with in the past and I enjoyed chatting with them as they hauled mulch, dug holes, and made sure the plants were safely installed. They stayed until the end and made sure that the work was finished before leaving for the day. Saturday night, my body was sore from the lifting, hauling, and digging, but I was proud of the transformation. We are planning for a second phase so that we can install gardens along the walls of the building as well.

Sunday, our family went to see *Little Women*. I was so touched by this story from my childhood in its newest form. Jo was as inspiring as I remember her as a young girl, and I so loved the ending where the story that inspired me to be an educator was hinted. *Little Men*, a sequel, is the story of Jo's vision of a school that is progressive, experiential, and filled with joy. This story set the foundation for the types of schools that have always inspired me and, in fact, feel quite a bit like CDS.

I had the privilege of seeing myself in the characters of *Little Women* and found Jo to offer the feisty independence I sought as a young girl. Today, what makes me proud is that our CDS library is filled not only with classic tales of literature, but also contemporary stories that are more representative of the world our students live in and the many voices that deserve representation. Louisa May Alcott was a strong female voice during a time when voices were mostly white males. Today, there are so many opportunities to see oneself or a very different perspective in literature.

On Monday, I joined hundreds of others in the Martin Luther King, Jr. March here in San Francisco. For me, one of the most inspiring moments of the day was approaching the march, hearing the drums, and seeing so many people moving together in a common cause. Moments later, I saw three CDS families and it was wonderful to find connection amidst the sea of inspiring faces. Another inspiring moment was when Mayor London Breed, an African-American woman born in San Francisco and raised in public housing, talked to the crowd about her background and how she was the dream – and the crowd was the dream – that Dr. King had imagined. Her words were inspiring, and it was also inspiring to see so many young women recording the moment. I could only imagine the pride of seeing a face like the one they see each day in the mirror up there on stage as the Mayor of their city. There were other speeches: four young women from different faith communities spoke about the importance of justice in their lives. A choir and a spoken word poet offered moments for us to connect in song. The energy was positive, collaborative, and focused on how we can inspire justice in our world. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Understanding where there is injustice in the world is the most important work we can do together as we work to create a just world.

All in all, the weekend was filled with opportunities to see how communities can come together and make an impact in our world. Earlier this year, when I was interviewed by our kindergarten classes, one of the things that I asked them to do was to reflect on ways they can have a positive impact on their worlds. Seeing so many people working to make an impact in our world was inspiring and I wish that for all members of our community.

Warmly,  
Shelly