



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

Volume 92 Number: XXIII

"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

Friday, March 20, 2015



## *Thoughts for the week*

*By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster*



Today is Faculty Workshop Day, which is an important part of the school year. Even though our students are not a school today, our teachers are spending the day examining important issues for Garden School as we continue the process of growth and development as a community.

Throughout the day, teachers and administrators will work together on a number of projects and ideas for the future. We will review the results of the Parent Survey and look for ways of responding to and implementing some of the suggestions. We will examine the process of communication, of the way in which the curriculum and the extra-curriculum implement the mission, of how to create and structure a character/values education program for our school and finally, we will have our first discussion of the upcoming NYS AIS accreditation process.

Our day will be filled with ideas, plans, strategies and requirements to realize these plans. It is a time for us as educators to come together as a community and strengthen the bonds and the goals of that community. As Garden School moves into its future, it is important to understand what the challenges will be for the educated person of the next two decades. All of the challenges of collective work, global viewpoint, group problem solving—all of these need to be addressed, explored and implemented in ways that prepare our students for this world.

Reminder: our Gala is just one week away. I urge all of you to attend and to support this vision of the Garden School's future. We are a community that has strength, vision and goals. Please join me at the Gala to support these values.



## **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- **Friday, March 27: Garden School Gala at Terrace On The Park**
- **Monday, March 30: Practice PSAT for Grades 8, 9 and 10**
- **Wednesday, April 1: Marking Period 3 Ends**
- **Thursday, April 2 – Friday, April 10: School Closed for Spring Break**
- **Monday, April 13 : School Resumes**
- **Thursday, April 16: Report Cards Distributed**
- **Friday, April 17: Report Cards Returned**

## **Please return your enrollment agreement *ASAP***

***The deadline for returning enrollment agreements was last week, Friday, March 13th.*** If you have not already returned your agreement, note that your child's place in the school has not been secured for next year. In addition, the school cannot adequately plan for next year as we remain unclear on enrollment. Even if you are not in a position to return the agreement at this time and so secure your child's spot for next year, it is at least imperative that you inform the school of your intent to enroll or not. Contact the Front Office as soon as possible regarding your plans and make every effort to return your agreement early next week. Thank you!

## ***Gala Raffle Tickets on Sale Now!***

The Gala Raffle has begun! We have some great prizes to win and only 100 tickets at \$50 each (3 for \$100!) will be sold per item! So, support Garden and be a winner!

Tickets are available at school by credit card or check or by calling the school (718) 335-6363.

Prizes are great looking, high end Movado men's watch and an elegant and eye-catching Tiffany's leather tote bag...





## ***Garden School Parent Survey***

Recently, the administration has hosted a series of coffee mornings for parents. The purpose of these mornings was to connect with families and to share the results of the Parents Survey and to talk to parents about how they could help the school achieve its goals to improve.



With 176 responses, participation in the Parents Survey was strong and everyone involved in the creation of the survey was very grateful. Survey results made clear that there was work to be done in a number of areas including school/home communication, , updating our facilities, and clarifying community members conduct and professional and academic expectations. It was very gratifying also, to read that overwhelmingly, parents are very pleased with many aspects of Garden. In particular, parents noted the individual attention that students receive, the level of care and thought that our faculty put into supporting each student's success and overall development and there was appreciation that this community concern contributed to the overall "homey" feel of the school. Parents understood that Garden's "non-institutional " encouraged the students at all levels of the school to feel comfortable, confident and allowed them to participate and shine both in class and also socially, and in the many extra-curricular activities that Garden offers. In short, 96% of respondents would recommend Garden School to friends so it appears the value of Garden School is clear, and there are suggestions about how to improve.

Since the survey, the administration has shared the results with the faculty. As a team, we have begun the process of identifying strategies and developing programs to address the areas of improvements, including at this Friday's Professional Development Day. More news on this work will be shared with parents and students within the next couple of months.

## ***Participation, Enrollment and the Referral Bonus Program - How Parents Can Help***

There were some wonderful and thoughtful suggestions that came from the survey. And, the reality is that some of the improvements require parent support, participation and partnership. Facility and communication improvements can be expensive items and require capital investment, advanced planning and expertise.

So, how can parents help? First, **please return your reenrollment agreements now**. We cannot move forward without knowing you are committed for next year.

Next, **participate in our fundraising and community building events** by lending your time, talent and/or treasure. Be an active member of the school's PTA and help organize and show up to the Gala next weekend. Support "communication" by being in "community" with us and one another. Come together to promote improvements, celebrate successes and demonstrate your mutual support of the school's efforts and commitment to excellence. Participate in the Walk-a-Thon. Make a direct tax-deductible donation to the school. (Gala Tickets, Information and donations here:

<http://www.gardenschool.org/gala/>)



Last but not least, **help us build enrollment**. Parents have made clear through the survey that small class sizes was an attractive quality of the school. So, in our efforts to grow as a community, we are only looking to maximize our numbers *to our limits* and we are NOT planning to increase class sizes beyond our current limit of 18 in the Lower Division and slightly higher in the Upper Division. But, because classes are split in higher grades, we do have space for larger *grade* communities in our Middle School and High School. Increasing enrollment is the best way to ensure the funds necessary to confidently initiate more substantial facility improvements. Tell your friends and your child's friends' families to come and visit during any of our Open Houses every Wednesday at 9 AM. Ask them whether you can pass on their contact information to us so we can make direct contact and answer questions and schedule their visit.

To further incentivize current parents to help us to spread the word and to increase enrollment, the Board has approved a **Family Referral Bonus Program**. For every NEW full-time Garden student that enrolls and pays their tuition due in full and indicates that you are their referring family, the current Garden Family that refers that family will receive \$1,000 tuition credit. For each *additional* new student that enrolls, the referring family will receive a \$1,500 tuition credit once the new family has paid their tuition in full. So, for example, if a current Garden family makes a referral of a new family with two kids, the current referring family will receive a tuition credit of \$2,500, once that family has paid its tuition in full. A new family with three kids? The referring current family receives a tuition credit of \$4,000, etc.

Although it is not necessary for us to have this card, the card below, available at the Front Desk, will allow us to keep track of your participation in a new family's enrollment. You can also choose to send an email with the information on the card directly to Jim Gaines, Director of Outreach, at [jgaines@gardenschool.org](mailto:jgaines@gardenschool.org). With your permission, we will follow up with the prospective family directly regarding their interest in coming to see Garden and possibly enrolling.

Thank you for your trust and confidence in enrolling your child at Garden School and also for all that you already do to support Garden School in other ways. Building enrollment is key to building a sustainable school and ensuring a strong future.



## Garden School Enrollment Referral Card for Prospective Families

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The following family might be interested in receiving information about Garden School for their children.

Referred Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Next September: \_\_\_\_\_ Current School (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to front desk, or the Outreach office or simply contact the **Garden School Outreach Office directly** at (718) 335-6363 x28 [jgaines@gardenschool.org](mailto:jgaines@gardenschool.org) [www.gardenschool.org](http://www.gardenschool.org)



## News from the Gala

Hello everyone, the Gala is right around the corner, Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at Terrace On The Park.

We are honoring two members of our school community, **Eileen Reyes**, Dean of N-K and a member of the Early Childhood Faculty along with **Lisa Sohmer**, Director of College Counseling and Upper Division Coordinator. We will also be honoring **Hope and George Alexiou**, Alumni Parents, in memory of Melina Alexiou '96.

**Please come join us as we celebrate the Garden School Community.**

This celebration is made possible by donations from all of us. Be it donations of time, items for our Silent and Live Auction, donations of wine for our Wall of Wine, a purchase of a Journal Ad, ticket purchases, or becoming a sponsor by making a donation to Garden.

The **Wall of Wine** is back for a 4<sup>th</sup> year. We are able, through donations, to put together a collection of wines valued at over \$1,000. Please help us with this year's collection. Help put together our sought after instant Wine Cellar.

**Participate in the Auction** by making a donation of a gift. We are amazed with the selections from past years. Theater tickets, sports tickets, gift certificates to restaurants, salons, hotels, fitness centers, use your imagination! Our signature gift baskets will be back and we will be happy to take donations to fill them.

**Tickets** are on sale and tables are filling up, so please send back your response cards or go to our website [www.gardenschool/gala](http://www.gardenschool/gala) to purchase tickets online. Can't come? **Buy a ticket for a teacher!**



**Volunteer your time on Gala Night. Email us if you would like more information.**

**Sponsor donations are welcome, send Garden a check!**

**Don't forget that participation in the Gala will earn points for your class towards the Pool/Pizza party.**

**Lets's make this the best party ever. The DJ is waiting to get us all out on the dance floor!**

**The Gala Committee**



## ***Mandarin for Early Childhood***

***By: Kelly Yang (Mandarin Teacher)***

In this multiple-day unit, students will gain the ability to recognize multiple types of foods and drinks and use this vocabulary in expressions of identification, description, and general communication. Teach students by showing a picture and teaching them the word orally. The priority is pronunciation (speaking). Then, play a game by showing various cards and seeing how many people have learned it and can pronounce it. Slowly work into various basic sentence structures. Begin teaching the verb 喝“hē” (to drink). Utilize it in a sentence, e.g., 我喝水。 Wǒ hē shuǐ. (I drink water.).

Initially, students will interpret and react to pictures, stories and illustrations. Then, students will interact with their teacher and classmates by identifying foods, asking for a variety of foods and drinks, and describing the foods.

## ***Social Studies for Grade 1***

***By: Jacquelyn Renner (Grade 1 Teacher)***

Community Helpers are important members of our neighborhood. First Graders are researching these workers as part of the economics unit of social studies. To begin their thinking, students sorted information about community helpers using a tree map with the headings can, keep, and help. Each student then chose a community helper to become the expert about. Through classroom resources and computer class, students learned about what the worker does, tools he uses, where he works, and his uniform. These facts were recorded on a graphic organizer to be used to complete their PowerPoint projects. Students have already designed the cover slide with their name, the community helper’s name, and a picture of the worker. Students can change font, insert pictures, and add animation. We will also be creating a museum exhibit in our classroom. Using craft items students will build a tool of their worker.

Students were able to make a connection between community helpers and a story we read in our reader, *Animal Teams* by Rachel Mann. This nonfiction book introduced interesting animal pairs in symbiotic relationships, such as the goby fish and the blind shrimp who help each other stay safe. The animals helped each other in many of the same ways community helpers do for us. They help keep each other safe, find food, and stay clean. Students were surprised to discover that animals of different species could work together. Teams of students created webs that showed the interdependence of workers. They brainstormed what jobs had to be done in order for a pilot, doctor, teacher, and chef to do their jobs.

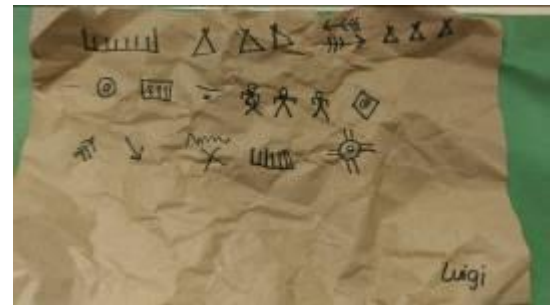


## ***Social Studies for Grade 2***

***By: Stephanie Parker (Grade 2 Teacher)***

The Second Graders are curious and they ask many thoughtful questions. When given information they are able to make connections to their prior knowledge to make insightful observations.

To begin our Social Studies unit on Native Americans, the Second Graders used these skills to guide their own learning. First, the Second Graders were presented with Native American objects such as a dream catcher and a loom. They were also shown photographs of Native American clothes, tools and instruments. On a "K-W-L Chart", the Second Graders discussed and recorded what they **K**now about Native Americans. Many students referred to books they had read, movies they had seen and artifacts they saw in museums. Then, the Second Graders wrote questions about what they **W**onder about Native Americans. The students wrote questions about homes, clothing, food and languages. Each lesson was designed to answer a question the students asked. The Second Graders were fascinated and even gave each other Native American names at recess where they acted out gathering fruit and storytelling by a campfire. The students presented what they **L**earned by creating Powerpoint presentations in the computer lab. The slides were dedicated to food, clothing and homes. The Second Graders are ready to begin a new unit on Colonial America. They are as curious as ever!



## ***Social Studies for Grade 3***

***By: Nilla Ingravallo (Grade 3 Teacher)***

The third graders have been celebrating Rainbow Week through a poetry reading and writing unit! This week, they have focused on figures of speech, especially similes and metaphors. They learned how these forms of writing enhance narrative writing as well as poetry. They observed how similes were used in *Stone Fox*, the legend that the third graders are reading; the similes allowed them to better visualize the characters, setting, and plot. The students analyzed these similes and discussed why the author, John Reynolds Gardiner, used them.



The third graders noticed how similes and metaphors are also used in poetry when they read color poems from *Hailstones and Halibut Bones: Adventures in Poetry and Color*. Using these examples as a model, they wrote their own similes and metaphors about various topics. They also applied this newly learned knowledge when they created rainbow poems for the colors of the rainbow. The students will revise and edit their poems through a peer editing activity; working with a partner, the students will enhance their writing by using their partner's feedback. Then, they will publish their poems on a rainbow template.

Over the next couple of weeks, the third graders will be learning, reading, and writing different forms of poetry, such as shape, theme, acrostic, and diamante poems.



## ***Physical Education for Grades 4 to 6***

***By: Amy Ledden (Physical Education Teacher)***

The 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades are having a blast in Physical Education! We have finished our golf and wiffleball units and have been teaching a brand new sport.

This week, the Upper Division has been participating in Spirit Week, where two periods in the afternoon are spent with the blue team and the white team competing against each other for points in all different activities, including Alaskan Kickball. We have introduced Alaskan Kickball to the lower division grades as well, with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> playing with all the rules that the Upper Division follows. Alaskan Kickball is played with the class divided into two teams, one fielding and one kicking. When a kicker kicks the ball they run and get rewarded points as follows: pass the half court line= one point, touch the stage= two points, run back passed the half court line=three points, and return to the starting line=four points. The classes are loving the friendly competitive nature of the game and are learning new strategies every day. Keep up the great work!

## ***Music for Grades 7 and 8***

***By: Tom Heineman (Music Teacher)***

Each culture that the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders encounter in their global studies this year seems to lend itself to a different approach. The traditional Classical music of India is truly remarkable and utterly unique; one need only hear the *sound* of tablas (pairs of pitched drums) or the drone of the tambura to realize that there's really no other comparable music in the world. The class, therefore, delved into this culture by first considering the sound of the instruments above, along with the sitar, sarod, veena, and harmonium. They had an opportunity to hear both Hindustani music from Northern India (and artists such as Ravi Shankar) and Carnatic music from the South (as performed by S. Balachander). Students attempted to follow the structure of the music after we learned some of the rudimentary aspects and were quite receptive when listening to the traditional music.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also began exploring the music of South Africa. They are studying the history of South Africa during Apartheid through the music. Miriam Makeba's story of forced exile and amazing songs from the 1960s, which blended traditional African styles with music of Latin America, R & B, Soul Music, Jazz, and other genres, are at the center of the unit. The various styles are so fully integrated in her music as to appear organic, yet the end result is something completely novel.



## ***English for Grade 9***

***By: James Pigman (English Department Chair)***

“105 North Tower!” Even as we are charging the Bastille on the day of the French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Shakespeare's birthday on April 23<sup>rd</sup> is looming. The Bard wrote about 150 sonnets. Most of the students in grades 7 through 12 will select one of the fourteen line poems to memorize and recite in the classroom. Teachers will work to interpret and guide the students. “When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes ...” Who will select Sonnet 29 and seek to convey how the disgrace of that first line becomes “That then I scorn to change my state with kings”?





Complementing our study of the plays from The Tempest to Romeo and Juliet to Macbeth and Hamlet, the mastering of the recitation and meaning of these sonnets is another wonderful step in the appreciation of the fullness of the English language.

“The Poetry Recitation is my favorite student activity,” opined Dr. Marotta. “One student’s recitation of Poe’s “The Bells” made me see it anew, a view I had missed for years.” And the combination of the appreciation of poetry and the context of a school wide presentation always mark this day with excitement.

This year’s Recitation will be held at the Poets House at Battery Park in Manhattan on April 23. Some thirty five students will recite that day after being selected from their classroom presentations. The traditional First Prize the Kitchen Sink, a gigantic sundae donated by Jahn’s Restaurant and Ice Cream Parlor at 80<sup>th</sup> St. and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The award is celebrated as the top reciter sits down with five friends, six spoons, and an hour of gourmand delight that could prompt its own sonnet.

## ***English for Grade 10***

***By: Marcia Elkind (English and History Teacher)***

The sophomore class has had a busy month. They finished reading and discussing Ayn Rand's ANTHEM, a dystopian novel about a frightening future world. The novel provides another perspective on the "Who Am I?" question we have been examining all year. While I was on jury duty (doing my civic duty!) Mr. Pigman taught the class the correct way to write a business letter. This is an essential life skill. Someday they will apply for a job, or a grant and they will need to know how to write to the point, clearly, with grammatical perfection! They practiced this skill by creating a screenplay for the novel ANTHEM and then writing a cover letter to a fictional producer, trying to entice him to produce their film. They learned proper formatting and style, complete with addressing the envelope.

Currently, they are reading SONG OF SOLOMON, by the Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison. This work touches upon many themes: identity, being black in America, coming of age, falling in love, the value of family and friendship. Through a complex plot and a myriad of characters, Morrison weaves a magnificent tapestry. Our journey through the novel will take some time, as we will savor the rich language and imagery Morrison uses to express her ideas. I expect students to read about 20 to 25 pages a night. For some this is a challenge, but developing the habit of reading lengthy works will prepare them for their university challenges.

## ***Math for Grade 11***

***By: Lara Leggio (Math Teacher)***

The Pre-Calculus class has been making great progress thus far. Our small class size makes it ideal for exploring various concepts in detail and to optimize understanding. We have recently finished our unit on exponential and logarithmic functions. Within this unit we explored the concept of infinity. We watched a short video describing and demonstrating Zeno’s Paradox, which helps us understand the idea of infinity.

The paradox goes like so: Greek philosopher Zeno wrote a book of paradoxes, including “Achilles and the Tortoise”. Achilles is a hero of the Trojan War, who is engaged in a race with a lowly tortoise, who is granted a head start. Both competitors move at a constant speed throughout the entire race. Before Achilles can overtake the tortoise, he must



first catch up with it. While Achilles is covering the gap between himself and the tortoise that existed at the beginning of the race, the tortoise continues to move, creating a new gap. This process continues, in which to Achilles' frustration, he can never overtake the tortoise. No matter how quickly Achilles closes each gap between him and the tortoise, the slow-but-steady tortoise will always open a new gap and remain just ahead of the Greek hero.

If you are interested, here is a short video demonstrating Zeno's Paradox in 60 seconds, which we watched during class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skM37PcZmWE>

## ***Math for Grade 12***

***By: Sonia Ambarsom (Math Teacher)***

The seniors just completed a month long project in which they created their own business and its website. The focus was on the design and visual appeal of the entire site and especially to consider the design of the homepage so as to make it attractive and inviting to potential users. Businesses opened included a Lamborghini showroom, a dog grooming and spa center, music studio rental for future musicians.

The considerations for the homepage were, first and foremost, attract ability and ease of navigation between the sites pages. Their sites provided detailed information on the company's products and a "purchase page" in which the user could go shopping. This entailed creating a form from which to choose listed items, number of items to be purchased. The final step was the calculation and submission of the complete order.

This project provided insight into the considerations needed to provide goods or services to users. It allowed them to develop their creativity, design the site so that it reflected the nature and personality of their business. Who knows? We may have the next Donald Trump or Sara Blakely in our midst!

## ***Spirit Week***

***By: Sonia Ambarsom (Student Council)***

Spirit week is a week-long event for the upper school students to celebrate their sense of unity and community at Garden. The week's activities are created and organized by the members of Student Council. The UD students are split into teams and each team is assigned a school color: one blue team and one white team. Each day has its own theme. This week the scenes ranged from pajama day on Monday to impersonation day on Thursday. Various activities are organized by the students in the gym during the last two periods of each school day. Activities include Simon says, a spelling bee, European handball, and various others. On the last day of the week, two senior boys participating in a "pie eating contest" and two senior girls participate in a "watermelon eating contest". Points are given to the winning teams for each activity. Points are tabulated and the first place winner is declared on the last day.

Congratulations and well played Blue Team.



## MORE News From the Gala

### HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD'S CLASS WIN

### A POOL/PIZZA PARTY OR ICE CREAM PARTY???

Please support the **2015 Garden Gala on March 27th** by contributing in any of the ways listed below and you could win a pool/pizza or ice cream party for your class!

One upper school and one lower school class with the highest percentage of Gala participation **will win a pool and pizza party during the school day!**

Second place will also be rewarded with an ice cream party.

Why a percentage? A class with 10 students has the same odds as a class with 36 students.

### How can you help your class win?

Points are awarded like this:

#### CLASS POINTS = WORTH 10 PTS EACH

- 1- JOURNAL CLOSED! Time is running out! Still time to...
- 2- Create/put together a **themed basket** as a class to be featured in the silent auction. Be creative and have fun! (See next page for basket ideas.) Or....pool together funds as a class for an item of higher value, like an iPad mini for the silent auction.
- 3- Your class can **purchase a single \$125 ticket to the Gala for your teacher** or any Garden teacher. Your class can send a teacher out for a night of fun!

#### INDIVIDUAL POINTS = WORTH 1 PT EACH

- 1- JOURNAL CLOSED! Time is running out! Still time to...
- 2- **Purchase a ticket to the Gala**. Each ticket is worth one point. This includes purchasing a ticket for a teacher as an individual.
- 3- **Donate an item** to the Live or Silent Auction.
- 4- **Make a donation** to the Gala of \$10 or more.

The winners will be announced the week after the Gala. In the event of a tie, the class that sold/purchased the most journal ads will be the final winner.

Class journal ads and individual journal ads will count equally in the tie breaker.

**All donations must meet deadline requirements.** Please go to the Garden Gala website for more information on deadlines for the different types of donations, <http://www.gardenschool.org/gala> or email us at [gala@gardenschool.org](mailto:gala@gardenschool.org).

