



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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## ***Thoughts for the week***

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



Schools are living, breathing entities. What is remarkable about a school is that it blends the individual and the group into an active and dynamic community. For this fusion to occur on a daily basis, there needs to be a continual commitment to the idea that individuals make up groups and that groups consist of individuals. This paradoxical state can be guided by activities and events; however, it depends mostly on the consciousness of all those involved. At the heart of the school's mission is supporting each individual who is also a part of a group, a group that encourages rather than detracts from that very individuality.

For the community of the school to be viable, it needs the support of all of its members. We see this at special events, such as the Gala, or internal events, such as the Holiday Boutique or Pasta Night. These events bring the school community together to celebrate and support the entire community's mission and also provide occasions for the individuals in the community to assert their group identity.

As I think about schools and about Garden School in particular, I am struck by the sense of oneness that we have. Just this week, we had an Alumni Career Day in which 10 of our graduates returned to talk about their lives after Garden School. What emerged from these discussions with current students was that even after two years, or in some cases twenty years, these alumni remained members of our community. They recognized some of the changes that have taken place in our school, but they were aware that this school would remain an important and vital part of their lives.

A school is a rather unique entity in that sense. Each day, over 300 hundred individuals contribute in the common exercise of learning. The product here doesn't appear to be tangible; it can be rather abstract at times. The evidence that the educational process is succeeding is the individual growth of the student or the teacher. The process is communal; the results are individual. In order for those individual results to occur in meaningful ways, the community's pursuit of learning needs to be powerful and effective.

Today, our community is coming together for a Pep Rally, then back to back boys' and girls' basketball games and then we will come together for Pasta Night, a night in which our community will share a meal. Eating together as a school reaches back in history to the earliest moments in education. Even the earliest words used to describe the 'institutional 'nature of education speak to the idea of community: "college" comes from the Latin word *collegium*, which means to read together. That's what we do: we read together, we eat together, we play together, we learn together—we are the Community of the Garden School.