



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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"Cultivating Success in Every Child"

Friday, December 15, 2017



Thoughts for the Week

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



At one of the Heads of School conferences I attended, the question of race in schools was raised by one of the presenters. Ali Michael, Director of the Center for Race and Equity at U Penn., discussed the issue in some detail and, in fact, has written a book on the subject, *Raising Race Questions*, published by Teachers College press.

Ms Michael challenges some of the assumptions that schools make about race, in particular, that schools should be color blind. Many schools adopt this position in order to generate equality and fair standards among the population. However, Michael's point moves the discourse in the other direction. To the point that race should be discussed and play a positive role in the thinking and structuring of curriculum and activities, much in the same way that gender does. For example, if as an English Teacher you are planning a curriculum, you might think it important to have a gender balance in the authors read in class and in the characters who inhabit those books. The initial premise is that the books be of high value and accessible to students while at the same time opening up the students awareness of the true diversity of the artistic process.

In *Raising Race Questions*, Michael argues that the surest way to insure an equitable environment in the classroom is through the acknowledgement of racial differences in positive and honest ways. This seems to be to be very similar to Garden School's embracing the many cultures within its walls. At Garden, "educational diversity" and recognizing each student's individual identity is written into our Mission Statement. For us, race matters in the sense that we are a school without a majority and a school that celebrates our students for who they are and not for who they are not. Our commitment to small class sizes is a reflection of our commitment to recognize, encourage, and include each student's identity in the community and in the educational process.

I have often argued that tolerance is a negative characteristic, because it implies the assumption of a 'norm,' which then accepts those who are different. Our school doesn't "tolerate" difference; our school recognizes differences as the natural human condition. Indeed, these differences add to the richness of our educational program and better prepare our graduates for our increasingly global world.

I do believe that Michael endorses the concept that school's need to embrace differences openly and not behind the veneer of supporting equity through denial. Our goal and mission as a school rests on the principle that diversity is natural, beautiful and embedded in our identity.

Richard Marotta, Ph.D.
Headmaster



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Friday, December 22 : Noon Dismissal
Lower Division Show at 9AM
Upper Division Winter Trip
Faculty Gathering: 1-4PM
- Monday, Dec. 25 - Friday, Jan. 5 : School Closed for Winter Break
- Monday, Jan. 8 : Classes resume
- Thursday, Jan. 11 – Thursday, Jan. 18 : Midterm Exams for Upper Division
- Monday, Jan. 15 : School Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Friday, Jan. 19 : Marking Period #2 Ends
- Thursday, Jan. 25 : Report Cards Distributed
- Friday, Jan. 26 : Return Report Cards

**New for 2017-
2018
Newsletter!**

**Teacher and staff
names by the
articles are also
email links!**

SAVE THE DATE: GARDEN SCHOOL GALA - FRIDAY, APRIL 13TH!!

Daniel Webster Society: A Wonderful Start to the Campaign!

By: [Richard Kruczek](#) (History Faculty)

The Daniel Webster Society of Garden School is our middle school debate team. We compete in the Empire Division of the New York Debate League, sponsored by the English-Speaking Union of the United States. The Empire Division is arguably the most elite of all the ESUUS' many divisions across the East Coast, sporting the strongest three-person teams from schools such as Hackley (reigning regional champions), Speyer (runners-up), Nightingale-Bamford and the Harvey School. [Read more about the League here.](#)

On Saturday, December 2, Garden matched wits with these schools at the West End Invitational. Not only did our nine-person team (composed of three three-person squads) come out with a winning overall record, but our team of Jayden P., Cecilia I. and Syeda R. went 4-1 and placed in the top three, overall! Well done you debaters!

Lost and Found will be Donated Over the Holiday Break!

Please check the Lost and Found for any articles of clothing, etc. It will soon be gone!

Garden "Community" Site Improves Communication

Garden parents use the Garden School website to access everyday information. The trouble is, it **costs Garden School every time you use Google to find us and it** can take a while to load and *it is so many clicks to find what you want!* We have a simple solution, [the Garden Community Site!](#) Click on or visit the link ON YOUR PHONE to check it out and save the icon to your phone homepage. Visit <http://www.gardenschool.org/community/> and quickly access all the info you need! Save time and money!



**In the Spirit of peace and joy
this holiday season, all family and
friends are invited to**

Groovy Garden Winter Show

On

Friday, December 22nd at 10 AM

Performed by the Lower Division

In the

Garden School Gym

All are invited.

Best wishes for a happy holiday

and a magnificent New Year!

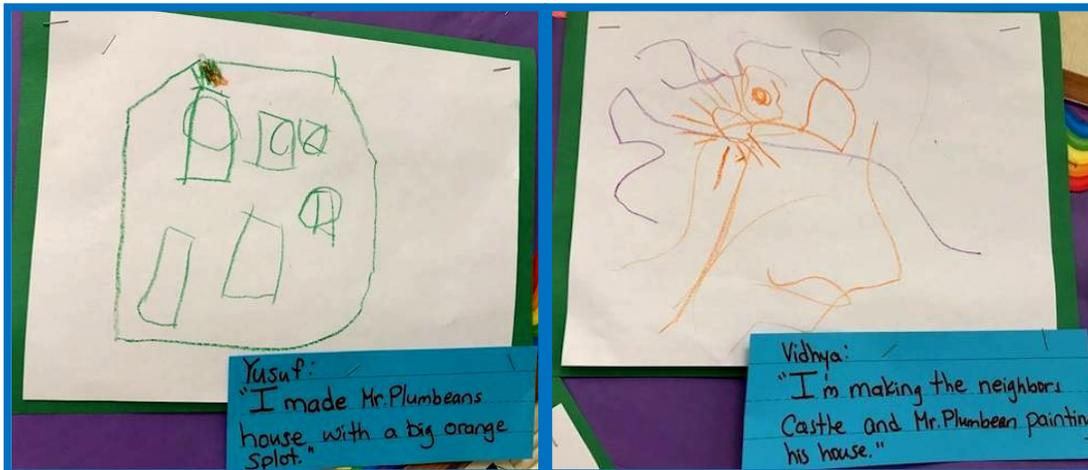
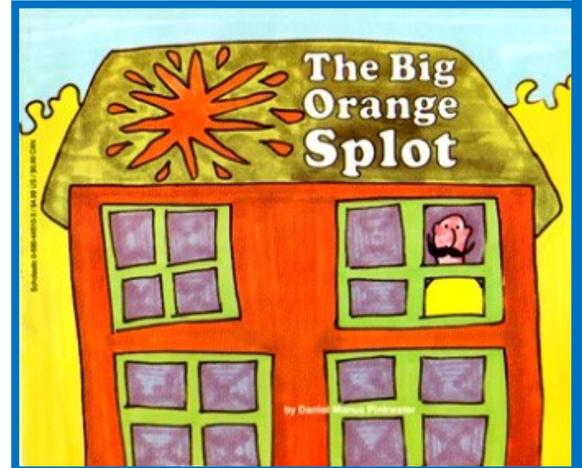


Pre-K For All - Language Arts

By: [Laura Gilbert \(Ganley\)](#) (PKFA Teacher)

This week, we continued with our theme of the month "Where We Live." This month we are focusing on writing using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing using compose informative or explanatory text, and identifying characters and major events in a story. The class also discussed vocabulary words such as neighbor, house, palace, apartments, villas, and castles.

The class read the story *The Big Orange Splot*, by Daniel Manus Pinkwater. We discussed the characters of the story, and why the character Mr. Plumbean changed the look of his house. After reading the story the students were able to socialize their ideas and thoughts about the book in small groups. After our discussion students were asked to draw a picture of what they recalled from the story.



Nursery Science

By: [Carmela Knopf](#) (Nursery Teacher)

Nursery has begun learning about different celebrations. This week, we've been talking about Hanukkah. Some books we read were *Hanukkah – a counting book* by Emily Sper and *It's Chanukah!* by Ellie Gellman. We made a menorah art project using spoon straws and stickers. We colored menorahs and dreidels to take home and share. On the smart board, we sung the dreidel song and listened to stories. We learned that the worker candle is called the Shamash and that there are 8 nights of Hanukkah. Since our school is in a diverse neighborhood, it's never too early to begin learning about the different holidays that people celebrate!





Pre - Kindergarten Science

By: [Eileen Reyes](#) (Dean, Early Childhood)

The first snow of the season this past weekend has inspired the Pre-Kindergarten class to explore snow!

The first thing the children noticed was that sometimes the snow falls in tiny single flakes, and sometimes it falls in big clumps of many flakes. Comparisons of light, fluffy and heavy, compacted were made. Many students went out to play while it was snowing and noticed how the snow covered things such as trees, cars, sidewalks, and themselves. We had a discussion on how the wind pushes flakes so they fall at an angle rather than straight down. This causes one side of a tree or car to have more snow on it than the other. Some children talked about making footprints in the snow and others made snow angels.

Everyone agreed that snow is cold and wet. We took some snow inside the classroom and put it on the heater to see what would happen. It melted as most students predicted would happen. One child shared how he took a snowball into the house in his pocket and it melted. He was so surprised to learn that the very same thing happened in *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. We also read *Best in Snow* by April Pulley Sayre, and *Snow* by Uri Shulevitz. The children were very creative as they read *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs to the teachers and each other.

To follow up this first snow of the season experience, the sand table was filled with *Speedy Snow*, instant life like snow and life like snow balls. Much fun was had as the children took turns experimenting in this center. More lessons on snow will be added throughout this winter season.



Kindergarten Social Studies

By: [Lauren Yandow](#) (Kindergarten Faculty)

As we approach our holiday break, Kindergarten has been busy studying the different holidays that fall in the month of December as well as Diwali which occurred in November. We began our holiday unit with this Indian holiday, Diwali, which is also known as the Festival of Lights and is celebrated for 5 days. Students learned about different family traditions as well as the story of how the holiday came about. We read various informational texts and watched videos relating to the holiday and traditions such as hanging up lights and lighting candles called diyas, cooking food, and creating unique sand designs called rangoli on the floor of your home to welcome visitors. Students had the opportunity to create their own sand designs using replicas of the different designs, glue and colored sand. This was a challenging multi-step independent activity that allowed the students to be creative but also follow specific instructions at the same time.





The next holiday we focused on was Kwanzaa! Although this is not a religious holiday, it happens to begin the day after Christmas and continue for 7 days. None of the students have ever heard of this holiday and thus were very intrigued by some of the traditions, seven core principles, and even music. By learning the seven principles that are celebrated and discussed by families on each of the seven days, students were exposed to new, advanced vocabulary in order to understand the importance of Kwanzaa to the African American people. Some of this vocabulary included words like unity, determination, and cooperative. Together we created a Kwanzaa poster displaying different symbols of the holiday: a Kwanzaa wreath using our hands and paint in the 3 colors of Kwanzaa, red, black, and green, the Kinara, a candleholder with seven candles used in celebrating each of the seven days of Kwanzaa, and the unity cup which represents the first core principle.



This week we have been studying the holiday Hanukkah, because it began yesterday! Through our discussions of this holiday we were able to make many different connections to the traditions of both Diwali and Kwanzaa. Students noticed that both Diwali and Hanukkah are also known as the Festival of Lights, and both Hanukkah and Kwanzaa use a candle holder to celebrate each of the days of the holidays! We have been working hard on creating Hanukkah cards using paint and a stencil of the shamash, the middle candle on the menorah used to light the other candles. These cards will also help us practice writing simple sentences!

We look forward to wrapping up our holiday unit by learning about Christmas next week!! Happy Holidays everyone!

Grades 1-3 World Languages - Mandarin

By: [Kelly Jie](#) (Mandarin Teacher)

In this multi-day lesson, the First through Third Grade students gained the ability to describe different physical features of family members and friends in Chinese. Students asked and responded to simple questions about physical features. Students also express their own descriptions regarding the physical features of family members and friends. Finally, students will be able to compare different physical features of family members and friends in Chinese.

Grade 4-6 Social Studies

By: [Jackie Renner](#) (Social Studies Teacher)

Fourth Grade has begun exploring the five regions of the United States with the Northeast. They have practiced the states and capitals through songs and interactive maps. In small groups, posters were made that describe the region's resources and their uses. The current project is a timeline of Northeast events through women's suffrage. Using their textbook, each student developed a list of 10 to 15 events. They have begun to create an interactive timeline using a timeline builder, timetoast.com. When an event is selected an illustration and a description written by the student appears. Once the timelines are complete they will be shared on the teacher homepage.

The fifth grade is marching towards the Revolutionary War. They have explored the beginnings of colonization and the Thirteen Colonies. One of the favorite activities include using QR codes. The first activity where they were used was with mapping. Students were tasked with labeling and color coding maps to show how the New World was claimed by Spain, France, and England. When scanned by a qr code reader on phone or tablet, a corresponding map loaded to help



complete the work. Another use of the qr codes was during a review activity, "Scoot". Cards with questions were placed around the room. After a student recorded their answer, he or she could scan the code and instantly receive the correct answer. As they traveled through the room, shouts of "Yes, I got another one right!" and "That's five in a row!" Could be heard.

Sixth graders meet once a week in research class to research different topics and share their findings through various projects. They have learned about colleges that interest them. Through college websites, students know the address, population, tuition, admission requirements, and extracurricular activities which were displayed on school pennants. Another project completed was a how to survive pamphlet. Students researched what to do before, during, and after a zombie attack, a tornado, and double recess, to name a few.

The current project is a PowerPoint that identifies a problem, provides a solution, and proves it is the best solution. Topics chosen include the need for five days of Phys Ed, adding a film class to the curriculum, and designing a new lunch menu. During research class students are evaluating websites, conducting surveys, using in text citations, and writing works cited pages. Next week, the students will share their presentations and attempt to persuade the class to support their proposals.

Grade 7 and 8 Physical Education

By: [Flance Dervishi](#) (Physical Education Teacher)

We have started our Volleyball Unit in PE class. Everyone has learned the rules of Volleyball, they have learned how to bump and set as well. The first thing we worked on in class is the correct way of rotating. Rotation can be a bit confusing if not learned the correct way. We also worked on Positions, they are all numbered, one through six, starting with the server in the back-right corner. Then going in a counter-clockwise direction. One of the hardest parts of Volleyball is learning how to serve the correct way, seventh and eighth graders are just starting to learn the sport and it's been a challenge, but progress is happening every class. We want everyone to feel comfortable with everything before we can start playing games against each other. We will keep you posted on how they are progressing.





Grade 9 Math - Geometry

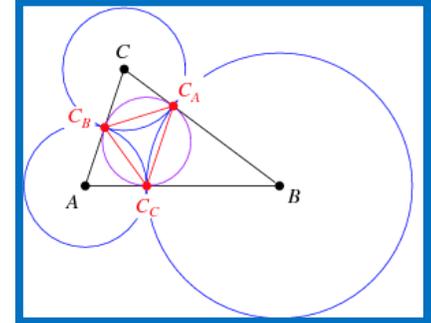
By: [Sonia Ambarsom](#) (Mathematics Faculty)

The ninth graders in Geometry have been studying the set of quadrilaterals. This set includes: parallelograms, rectangles, rhombuses, and trapezoids. This study of geometric properties is accentuated using visual aids to make it more realistic for the students. In addition, the study of algebra enables the students to see their properties in action, numerically.

Grade 9 Math - Geometry

By: [Lauren Little](#) (Mathematics Faculty)

In Geometry Honors, we recently finished a chapter on parallel lines, parallelograms, and trapezoids. In this chapter, the students learned that rectangles, rhombuses, and squares are all special types of parallelograms and they learned the properties of each of them.



This week, we started studying circles. We have discussed arcs and chords in circles, lines tangent to circles, and tangent circles. Going forward we will study the measurements of angles and arcs in circles.

Grade 10 Math - Algebra II & Trigonometry

By: [Sonia Ambarsom](#) (Mathematics Faculty)

The tenth graders in Algebra II & Trigonometry have been studying functions and the basic operations on function, including: addition, subtraction, multiplication, dividing, and composition of functions. Probably, the most essential part of their study involves the graphing of these functions. They have studied the basic functions extensively, then, using the concepts of transformations of functions, they can sketch the graph based on this knowledge.

Grade 11 and 12 Fine Arts Elective

By: [Christopher Zelles](#) (Art Teacher, Fine Arts Department, Chair) The 11th and 12th grade students have been doing amazing work this year, and the last two weeks have been no exception. Along with other students they have been putting many hours working on the Lower Division Winter Show backdrop; even working on it after school. The theme on the Winter Show is the 1960s and the work that has been done so far is exquisite. The backdrop is 12x18 feet and has several images that represent music from the 1960s. This project has been a true labor of love and the pride that the students have for it is truly evident. Here is a look at the backdrop and the students working on it.

