

December 19, 2008

Volume 5, Issue 11

Garden School News

CIVILITY • RESPECT • HONESTY • KINDNESS



33-16 79th Street
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Tel 718-335-6363
Fax 718-565-1169
info@gardenschool.org

Headmaster
Dr. Richard Marotta

Lower Division Head
William Vogel

Director of Finance
Mary Maisano

Director of College
Counseling
Lisa Sohmer

Garden School PTA Officers

PTA President
Martha Palacio

Co-Vice Presidents
Ivette Mayo
Lisa Thompson

Secretary
Rosemary Dineen

Treasurer
Nilda Chu

Corresponding Secretary
Cynthia DeMonte

Committee Chairpersons

Outreach
Richard Langberg
Ivette Mayo

Technology
Ed Ermler
Kim Cummings

Foundations
Orlaith Staunton
Kim Cummings

Headmaster's Column



It is common practice for most independent schools to engage the services of a psychological counselor in some form or another. Some schools, though this practice has been decreasing, employ a psychologist on staff, while others use the services of a consultant.

Beginning this December, we have engaged the services of Dr. Debora Klener, who comes to us through Kenwood Psychological Services, a group with which we have associated for many years. The service model that we have chosen to use is that of a weekly visit and consultation by Dr. Klener. Each week, during a two hour period, Dr. Klener will meet with me to discuss any concerns I may have about a child, a class, or a general situation that would benefit from some outside counseling and guidance. She will (and has to date) meet with teachers to discuss their concerns about a class or child; following those discussions, Dr. Klener will pass on her recommendations to the teacher and to the appropriate administrator.

We are not using a therapy-model; we are using a consulting model. The difference is that Dr. Klener will offer suggestions and guidance but not engage in conducting therapy. Any therapy recommendations that will be made, of course, will be made as a general recommendation to parents.

Our hope for this additional service to our community is that we can increase the level and the degree of support that we provide to our teachers and students. Dr. Klener comes to us with a great deal of educational experience and wisdom and has already demonstrated her skill by making some detailed and positive suggestions in a number of areas. Our thinking is that teachers and students will benefit from this process that gives us another way of looking at our school and some of the issues that will inevitably occur within an educational environment.

Upper Division Highlights

On December 10, Mr. James Cohen '90 came to Garden to address two separate groups of upper division students and assorted faculty at the behest of Mr. Richard Grusky. Mr. Cohen served for almost a decade in the Foreign Service, a division of the State Department, replete with stints in Egypt, Bosnia and Ecuador. While in this position, Mr. Cohen worked directly with Secretaries of State Colin Powell, and Condoleeza Rice. This past year, Mr. Cohen became the Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Yale University, a position he currently holds.

Each of the sessions was both informative and highly beneficial for all involved.

Lower Division Updates

Continuing with their winter theme, the Nursery students read *The First Snowfall* by Anne and Harlow Rockwell. They painted snowflakes with glitter paint and collaged snowmen with construction paper and cotton. The Nursery students have also been hard at work creating a very special surprise holiday gift for their parents

Holidays are an exciting time of year. The Pre-K has taken the opportunity to study different holidays in their social studies class. With the use of exciting literature, Pre-K has been learning about each holiday. All students were invited to bring in a symbol of the holiday that they celebrate. Each morning several students take turns sharing

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 3

Garden School After Hours

Winter is a busy season....

Our school is a busy place. Classes end at 2:40 P.M., but most children and teachers remain long after this. They attend Foundations courses, after school activities, meetings; participate in clubs and sports teams; and much, much more. At the end of each day and on the weekends, our facility takes on an after hours life of its own. We host an array of activities and classes for adults and children from the community.

The rental income generated helps to bridge the gap between tuition revenue and operating expenses. It also gives us an opportunity to open our doors and introduce our school while sharing our mission.

Take a look below at the calendar of activities listed for Winter 2009. Some courses are run by Garden School parents or faculty, others by community residents with notable talents. Some are educational, some recreational, but all in some way contribute to the vitality of Jackson Heights.

If you are interested in any of these courses, contact numbers are listed on the calendar. Those interested in becoming a part of "Garden After Hours", please contact our Business Office.

Traditions support the very mission of an institution. At Garden we began the celebration of the holiday season with the PTA's annual holiday boutique. Mr. Hale's classroom was transformed by the many parent volunteers to a mini-department store stocked with gifts and gadgets. The children were thrilled to make purchases, have them wrapped and tagged and walk away with shopping bags filled with gifts for family and friends.

The PTA also sponsored the annual food drive for City Harvest. Cardboard boxes lining the main hall were filled with donations of non-perishable goods, i.e., canned vegetables, pastas and soups. The holiday season is a time for giving and our families have once again been very generous to those in need.

Members of our Key Club are always involved in charitable community activities. Most recently, they teamed up with NY Cares in the annual winter coat drive. Coats, scarves and hats were collected over a two week period and dropped off at the 115th Precinct.

The Student Council sponsored an upper division Snow Ball on Friday evening. Students danced, socialized, and listened to the DJ music at this semi-formal, while enjoying seasonal treats of homemade cookies, hot chocolate and spiced apple cider.

Garden School After Hours					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	SATURDAY
10am-1pm Ethical Culture Society of Queens For more info: Tom Raffaele	4pm-7pm Weight Watchers Mtg. For more info: 1-800-651-6000	8:15-9:45pm Vinyasa Yoga For more info: Joe Lunievicz RYT Rolling Oms Yoga	7:30-8:30 pm Pilates Mat Class For more info: Mary Murray: 718-505-9366	7:00-8:30 pm Yoga with Doreen For more info: Doreen O'Sullivan	9:15-10:45am Vinyasa Yoga For more info: Joe Lunievicz RYT Rolling Oms Yoga 347-400-8940
10:00 am-1:00pm Princeton Review Course For more info: 718-459-4192	7pm-8:30 pm The Bodytoner Low Impact Aerobics Stretch & Tone For more info: Marcia Elkind 718-335-2297				10:00am-Noon Weight Watchers (In Spanish)—Beg. 1/10/09 For more info: 1-800-651-6000
					9:00 am-Noon Garden School Writing Project—Beg. 1/10/09
					9:00 am-1:15pm Princeton Review Course For more info: 718-459-4192
					10:30am-12:30pm Super Soccer Stars Indoor Soccer 2.5-5 yrs. For more info: 212-877-7171
					11am-12 Noon Karate Kickboxing For more info: Orlando Sanchez 646-335-6465
					12 noon-5:00 pm Dance for Infants and Toddlers For more info: Dionne Kamara 646-784-2643



ONGOING EVENTS: KAPLAN TEST PREP (718) 726-8991; PRINCETON REVIEW (718)459-7192; GYM RENTALS (718)335-6363; QUEENS GARDEN STAGE THEATRE (917)612-0275

Upper Division Highlights —Continued from page 1

Mr. Cohen spoke for roughly forty minutes on his various stops, as well as his insight on the United States' position in world affairs. This was followed by his opening the floor for questions.

An engaging orator, Mr. Cohen never forgot the age level of the group he was addressing, and at times stopped to ask questions after making a point in order to give the students a point of reference. One such instance came when he asked the group if they were familiar with NATO. Our social studies department being what it is, students were well informed, but it still showed the level of care with which Mr. Cohen delivered his address.

To have as distinguished a speaker as Mr. Cohen was wonderful. The fact that he is a Garden alumnus made it all the more meaningful. It was an experience that can only happen in a place like this, and was one which those fortunate enough to be privy to will not likely forget.



In Memoriam

It is with deep regret that we mourn the sudden loss of Gus Spanos, graduate of the class of '68. Gus was currently serving as Treasurer of our Board of Trustees.

The Spanos Family has a long history with our school. Gus, his sister Gail '71 and brother Peter '73 all graduated from Garden School. His two sons, Nicholas and George graduated in 1997 and 2001, respectively. Gus' father, Nicholas Spanos was President of the Board of Trustees for many years.

He was a devoted husband to his wife, Maria and loving father to his sons.

We continue to value the family's friendship and extend our warmest and heartfelt condolences to Maria, his mother Mary and the entire Spanos family.

*Lower Division Updates—Continued from page 1*

their holiday with their classmates. It has been so much fun to sample traditional holiday foods as well as see and touch beautiful decorations. The Pre-K has joined in the festivities by decorating their classroom with colorful lights that are a symbol for so many different holidays. They have also been experiencing different holidays by cooking holiday foods such as latkes and cookies to sample some of the delicious traditional recipes.

While the Kindergarten has been preparing for the winter show, they have also been busy learning the history of the upcoming December holidays. In literature they have especially enjoyed comparing and contrasting different versions of *The Gingerbread Man* and *The Nutcracker*. The students have become fond of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. The children can be seen and heard in class dancing and humming to the music. Recently the children also made delicious latkes. We all enjoyed eating them with applesauce.

Since September, tumbling has been the focus of each Tuesday's Physical Education class for Pre-K and Kindergarten. With the help of Miss Kim, our after school dance teacher, the students have been rotating among stations to practice forward rolls, cartwheels, jumps and dances. Each week a new skill is introduced, and the class has become affectionately known as "Tumbling Tuesday".

First grade has begun a reading theme about storytelling. After reading *Baby Rattlesnake*, a Chickasaw folktale, the class became interested in the desert. They researched desert animals and plants during computer class, and they constructed dioramas of the desert which are on display in the first grade book corner.

Second graders are preparing to present their December book reports. The topic for this book report is an artist. Some artists they read about are Van Gogh, Monet, and Dorothea Lange. On Wednesday, each student will deliver a short presentation accompanied by a visual aid of their own art influenced by the artist.

Third graders have been busy completing their Queens Community projects. Each group will present their neighborhood to the class. They will be highlighting the historical significance of the name of the neighborhood, interesting facts, and the differences between the original settlers to the ethnic makeup of the area today.

The international spirit has definitely arrived at Garden School! Fourth graders created family trees for French class. Students learned the different words for

.....I M A S By Sonia Ambarsom

Dr. Chudnovsky is a distinguished industry professor at the Polytechnic Institute of NYU. He is known as an accomplished mathematician, a builder of supercomputers, and, to us, quite simply as Marian's dad. Dr. and Mrs. Chudnovsky graciously invited the fourth grade students to visit the Institute for Mathematics and Advanced Supercomputing (IMAS) at Polytechnic Institute of NYU in Brooklyn, a division of the university created by Dr. Chudnovsky and his brother in which their special art of supercomputing could be applied to real world problems.

One of his great achievements involved the tapestry of "The Hunt of the Unicorn" and a series of digital photographs required by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for archival preservation. Dr. Chudnovsky was then summoned to complete the seemingly unsolvable task of re-aligning the image fragments so as to create one single uniform copy of the masterpiece which currently hangs in the university library. On Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008 the fourth grade was given the opportunity to view this copy firsthand on their trip to the university.

The trip began at Dr. Chudnovsky's office in which the students were asked to don blue surgical booties so as to preserve the unique floor which displays a conical configuration of 115 different equations especially made by 3M Plastics for the institute.

The theme of progress in life began here with these equations. The configuration seemed overwhelming and incomprehensible to the students until an analogy was made to their own physical and mental progress of growth and learning. They were reminded of their own experience with algebra, solving for the values of variables including the symbols of squares and stars. An air of confidence filled the room as they realized that they were indeed on their way to mathematical enlightenment.

Upon entering into the large office, one sees a home-made supercomputer to the right enclosed in a case of white plumbing piping. This supercomputer is not only seen but heard as the hum of the fans cool this magic machine. Even the cooling mechanism was made "real" as Dr. Chudnovsky likened the human brain to a natural supercomputer and the fans to human ears. The students were surprised to hear that the brain is equivalent to an extremely slow man-made supercomputer.

As the presentation continued, Matthew noticed a Wii numchuck on the desk. The students were noted this oddity. They soon learned that this familiar device could

easily be reprogrammed as a remote device for computer graphics applications. This unfortunately is not as precise as the computer's own cursor which uses mathematical coordinate system to manipulate its onscreen location (due to the instability of the human hand).

The presentation concluded with a YouTube video of the collapse of the Tacoma Bridge. They were surprised to learn that this event was probably due to a slight mathematical error overlooked in the design phase of the bridge. This fact reinforced their understanding of the importance of mathematics in the real world.

Thanks and appreciation once again to Dr. and Mrs. Chudnovsky for this unique experience.



Lower Division Updates -Continued from page 3

family members and wrote these on charts. They added family photos and mementos to personalize individual trees. Fifth and sixth grades practiced their French vocabulary by creating friendly letters and post cards. In each, students told family and friends about the activities they like to participate in during the winter season.

The Language Arts Department encourages the fourth through sixth graders to read for leisure by keeping a "Literary Genre" chart in the classroom. Students report what genres they've read and receive a prize when all the literary categories have been completed. The first student completing the chart is Max Bogusz of grade 6. Max won a great prize for his effort while enjoying many good books. Congratulations Max!

Foundations Update

Taekwondo Club News!

Students from the Taekwondo Foundations class have been working very hard this semester! They memorized and practiced blocking sets, kicking sets and a choreographed form in order to test for promotion to yellow belt!



Five students, Kathleen Staunton, Ania Ermler, Gabrielle O'Reilly, Matthew Hale and Rachel DiSibio tested in front of Master Kyong Hoon Kim, Ms. Sarran's Taekwondo instructor and eighth degree black belt. The students were outstanding! At the end of the test, they broke two pieces of wood, to show their focus and strength! ***They all received their yellow belts and medals:*** proof of their hard work and dedication.

Congratulations all!

Another semester of our Foundations After School Program is coming to an end. Email Ms. Flanagan jflanagan@gardenschool.org for the listing of final class dates. We would like to thank the faculty members and parents who made this session so successful.....Yvette Mayo, Peter and Ellie Glus, Karyn Slutsky, Ed Ermler, Christine Chudnovsky, Tiina Prio, Allyn Peterson, Stefanie Sarran, Kim Hayes, Orlaith Staunton, Kim Cummings, and our After School Director, Jessica Flanagan.

The Spring semester of classes will begin on February 2, 2009. A description of classes and schedule of days and times will be available shortly both on our website and in the main office.

Just between us.....Fashion will be back as well as Architecture and Legos. Keep an eye out for new courses such as Improv Comedy and Poetry. It should prove to be a wonderful Spring.



Coat Drive Collection for NY Cares

Summer 2009



We are in the midst of planning this year's summer camp. New this summer, the Garden Summer Program is partnering with several agencies (experts in their field) to provide an enriched summer experience for your children.

TADA! Youth Theatre www.tadatheater.com will be in residence providing young people with the opportunity to perform theatre together in an educational, supportive and professional environment while developing self-esteem, teamwork and positive communication skills.

Super Soccer Stars www.supersoccerstars.com will also call Garden their home this summer to teach soccer skills in a fun non-competitive, educational environment. Their philosophy is to use soccer to build self-confidence and to develop teamwork in every class.

Future issues of our newsletter will keep you informed of additional collaborations planned for the summer.

Winter is a busy season—continued from page 2

The annual Lower Division Winter Show held on the last school day was an enjoyable morning of song, music and instrumentals performed by students from PreK through sixth grade. The songs in English, Spanish, French and Mandarin celebrated the cultural richness of the Garden School community.

Each year, Student Council organizes a trip for the Upper Division students before all leave for winter break. In past years, students have gone ice skating or bowling. As the snow began to fall this year, students journeyed to the Midway Theatre in Forest Hills to see the opening of "Yes Man".

*Seasons Greetings
and
Happy New Year to all*

Garden School Reaches Out—Staff Development

National Science Teacher Association's Conference
By John Hale

Teachers have many responsibilities, including keeping abreast of the latest research on educational trends, methodology and resources. This month, I had the opportunity to attend the National Science Teacher Association's annual conference, in Cincinnati, Ohio. My main reason for attending this conferences was to learn how to implement technology into lessons and into the overall curriculum at Garden School. One of the sessions that I found rather appealing was the session about Vernier Probeware, especially since the Science Department recently purchased materials from this vendor. These probes enable us to computerize our labs, and the sessions I attended modeled how to integrate the technology throughout the science curriculum. Other sessions I attended were Lego's as an Instructional Aide, DNA Gel Electrophoresis, Mountaintop Mining, NSTA Online Assignment Tool, Physical Science Minds-on Activities, and Misconceptions in Science Teaching.



The highlight of the entire conference was getting the opportunity to meet Homer Hickam, author of the book *Rocket Boys: A Memoir*. Our eighth grade class will be reading this shortly. After discussing the theories and concepts presented, a school wide project of rocket building will commence.

Editor's note: Families interested in providing financial support for the Teacher Development Program are encouraged to contact the Headmaster.



1959 Sonny Hickam, Roy Lee Cooke & O'Dell Carroll holding rocket mock up

Decemberfest 2008—
By Lisa Sohmer

Last week, I traveled to Southern California to participate in Decemberfest 2008. The program brought together 41 college counselors from across the country who had been invited to be part of the 8-day program.

Over the course of the week, we visited the campuses of Whittier College, CalTech, Occidental College, University of Redlands and the five Claremont Colleges: Pomona College, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, Claremont McKenna College and Scripps College. At each stop, I saw student presentations, participated in student and faculty panels, took tours and met with faculty and the admissions staff. It was an exciting and interesting way to learn about the characteristics of each campus and to see what made each one unique.

On one of the evenings the counselors were joined by the Deans and Vice Presidents of Admissions from each of the 9 campuses for a roundtable discussion of trends in admissions and counseling. It came as no surprise that the economy and the College Board's new Score Choice program for the SAT were hot topics.

While it would be nice for all high school seniors to visit the West Coast in their search for colleges, it may not be possible for many of you. With the knowledge gained from a trip like this I am better able to counsel families and give a first person account of the culture of each of these schools.



Comedy Night @ Garden School

On Saturday, December 13, the gymnasium at Garden School was transformed into a comedy club—complete with twinkling lights, big laughs and a chance for members of our community to come together. Everyone had a wonderful time and more than \$2,000 was raised.

Comedy Night was coordinated by Board of Trustees member Michael Rakosi '64 who also served as the evening's master of ceremonies. Performances by DF Sweedler, Michael King, Elaine Williams, and Akash Bhasin were top-notch. All the performers are professional comics who have been featured in locations such as *The Comic, Strip, Comedy Central, Letterman* and *Saturday Night Live*. The night was a real treat, and we hope to make it an annual event.



L to R Michael Rakosi, Akash Bhasin, Elaine Williams, Michael King, DF Sweedler and our own Dr. Marotta

Garden School Dates to Remember

- **Mon., Dec. 22 – Fri., Jan. 2, 2009 – Winter Break (School Closed)**
- **Mon., Jan. 5, 2009 – Classes Resume**
- **Thurs., Jan. 8 – Trustees Meeting**
- **Fri., Jan. 9 – Senior Bake Sale**
- **Wed., Jan. 14 – Grade 3 & 4 trip to MOMA**
- **Thurs., Jan. 15 – Fri., Jan. 16 – Upper Division Exams**
- **Fri., Jan. 16 – Lower Division Pajama Day**
- **Mon., Jan. 19 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (School Closed)**
- **Tues., Jan. 20 – Thurs., Jan. 22 – Upper Division Exams**
- **Thurs., Jan. 22 – Grade 5 & 6 Trip to Brooklyn Museum**
- **Fri., Jan. 23 – Marking Period #2 ends**
- **Sat., Jan. 24th – Open House for School & Camp**