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# Garden School News

CIVILITY • RESPECT • HONESTY • KINDNESS

## Headmaster's Column



In an earlier issue of the newsletter, I wrote about an arrangement that we have made with Dr. Debora Klener from Kenwood Psychological Services. A number of you have asked me about this consulting model, and this seems to be a worthwhile forum in which to explore this process.

Most independent schools have some version of psychological services; these models range from on-site personnel to consulting personnel. No one any longer does 'therapy' on site; rather the thrust of the work is consultation and recommendation.

In our case, Dr. Klener spends two hours per week at the school. The way the model works is that either a teacher or an administrator will bring an issue to her for her observation and advice. For example, a teacher may wish to have Dr. Klener observe a class, either for the purpose of observing behavior, class dynamics, the way in which a particular child reacts to other children or the teacher. Once she has completed her visit, Dr. Klener will then share

her observations with the teacher and an administrator. Following that discussion, she can then offer some advice and some recommendations for the situation.

In another instance, it may be one of the administrators or deans who bring up an issue and solicit some advice from our consultant. In that case, first we discuss the issue in some detail and then either ask Dr. Klener to observe and recommend or simply to consult.

What we are also planning is that she will conduct a series of workshops, discussion groups, with some classes in particular to discuss such issues as peer pressure, bullying, self esteem etc. These are the moments when a consultant may be able to conduct a discussion with a more objective point of view that may allow students a greater comfort level in this kind of forum.

This seems to us to be an effective way of looking at some of our concerns from a somewhat different point of view.

## Upper Division Highlights      Lower Division Updates

The Upper Division is gearing up for the annual international trip program in February with the seventh/ eighth trip to Spain while the ninth through twelfth grades visit Ireland.

It was in 1994 when the idea of traveling abroad re-emerged in Garden School with a seventh through twelfth grade trip to England. The excitement generated by this trip was felt throughout the school. For a school with such an international population to begin an international travel program made a great deal of sense and, in fact, touched deeply into the core of some of our beliefs.

The following year's trip to Italy registered over 50 students and teachers. At that

The Nursery children have been getting musical. Each child made his/her own tambourine using two paper plates taped together with popcorn kernels inside, and then decorated by using markers. They enjoyed playing their new instruments in a marching band. The Nursery students have also been getting familiar with President-Elect Barack Obama. They looked at pictures of him, read facts about him, and learned about his family. The letter "O" for Obama has been the focus of study. They decorated letter O cut outs in red, white, and blue.

The Pre-K students have proven themselves to be creative artists. After learning about Pablo Picasso in Art class and seeing

## Inaugural Activities

On Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, the Lower Division truly acknowledged the significance of this year's Inauguration. While each Inauguration marks an important changing point in our nation's history, this one indubitably marks a large transition. It was only about 150 years ago, when the United States of America was still an infant within its first century of independence, that our nation recognized slavery as an acceptable means of labor. With that said, this Inauguration indefinitely reveals the ceaseless progress the United States has made throughout history, is making, and looks to continue to make. We are, and always have been, a nation in search of the next best thing for our citizens, and this Inauguration is a meaningful step.

Both the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade clusters had a day of activities that allowed each student to learn through multiple intelligences. They engaged in auditory, interactive, traditional, creative, and physical strategies throughout the day to honor and understand the importance of January 20<sup>th</sup>. Some of the activities included studying poetry of past poet laureates, listening to iconic American songs, learning the history of the White House and the Inauguration, and designing different decorations with which to adorn our Lower Division on Inauguration Day. Other activities included role play in an Inauguration reenactment and playing some sports President Barack Obama enjoys.

Along with honoring the new President, as well as the historical significance of this Inauguration, students discussed the relationship between perhaps our most influential civil rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and President Obama. A very profound political cartoon in which Dr. King is scaffolding President Obama into the legacy of great African-Americans was



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## Morning Meetings

Each Monday morning, the upper division comes together in the gymnasium for morning meeting. Presided over by Student Council officials and attended by students, faculty, and administrators, these meetings are a time for important announcements, discussions of pertinent topics, or sharing of thoughts.

For the past two weeks, Mr. Vogel has met with first through third graders on Tuesdays, and with fourth through sixth graders on Wednesdays. Again, these meetings took on a similar format to those held with the upper division.

Topics of discussion included some of the ideas presented in the book, *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-five Rules of Considerate Conduct*, by P. M. Forni. During the first meeting children discussed the notion of "being aware of," and "paying attention to," people and activities taking place all around us as the first step to being a civil person. Students were then presented with a familiar situation, being asked to have the salt passed in a restaurant or at home, and asked to consider the most appropriate response.

All attentively listened to the thoughts of students regarding the "salt passing" situation during the second meeting. Interestingly, one girl exclaimed that they were like the King and Queen, salt and pepper always go together, so politely pass both! Indeed this shows great empathy and careful consideration of the needs of others, whether spoken or not. Then Rule #2, "Acknowledging Others" was introduced, followed with student brainstorming of ways we acknowledge and compliment each other at school as a way of saying we know you're here and that you are important.

Next week's meeting will begin with the discussion of the feelings of people when someone pushes his way into a long line at the cashier, going to the restroom, or waiting for a drink of water. As the children ponder this throughout the week, you may find them being keenly aware of similar situations encountered by the family. These, too, may become important topics for dinner conversation or for quieter moments on the way to school.

## ***Lower Division Updates—Continued from page 1***

many of his paintings in art books, the Pre-K artists re-created their own Picasso paintings. They are hanging in their cubby room, which now looks like a museum of modern art. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President-Elect Barack Obama have been the focus of the Pre-K Social Studies classes. Peace and change have been the themes with stories read, art projects created, and lessons on leadership and caring discussed.

The Kindergarten welcomed in 2009 with New Year resolutions. The children and teachers discussed areas in which they all wanted to improve on. The students are exploring many January themes. In Science, they are learning about penguins, polar bears, the arctic, and Antarctica. They are making observations and comparisons about the opposite poles. In Social Studies, the students are gearing up for the historic Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. They have also been researching Martin Luther King Jr. and summing up how he would have felt about President-Elect Barack Obama.

First grade has been practicing their graphing skills. Each pair of students developed survey questions and polled the second grade. From those tally charts, one student drew a pictograph and the other constructed a bar graph. First graders now know the favorite toys, colors, foods, movies and sports of their second grade neighbors.

Second graders are learning about the significance of Abraham Lincoln, American slavery, Martin Luther King Jr., President-Elect Barack Obama and their relationships to citizenship, the American Dream and the promise of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal." Students watched films, engaged in class discussions and wrote on the subject. Students are also researching important figures in African-American history for their next book report, which will include an oral presentation, a written summary and visual aids. Some figures they are researching include Billie Holiday, George Washington Carver and Jackie Robinson.

Third grade has been studying fables. They have been discussing morals and making connections with the four corners: civility, honesty, respect and kindness. They also identified the elements of fables in order to write their own. On Pajama Day the class went downstairs to read their fables and other bedtime stories to the kindergarten.

As the New Year kicks off, so have our students with new books in the Language Arts classes! Students in grade four are delving into the fantasy and sugary filled

world of Charlie & the Chocolate Factory. Fifth graders are exploring the wilds and wonder of frontier America in the classic, *The Sign of the Beaver*. Our sixth graders meanwhile are jumping into a futuristic and sometimes disturbing world in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. Whether it's a fantasy, historical, or science fiction, students are being exposed to the many shades of literary genres

## ***Upper Division Highlights —Continued from page 1***

point the international trip program had established itself within the culture of the school.

Since then we have had close to fifty international trips throughout Europe and South America, and we are hoping to have at some point soon our first school trip to Asia.

Our commitment to this travel program really does stem from our inherent culture and our belief system. The population of our school represents an international tapestry of nations and ethnic groups; our philosophy resembles what the International Baccalaureate Organization calls 'international mindedness.' Together, these two forces combine to stimulate and solidify the idea that traveling with leadership and guidance enhances the educational experience of our students and our faculty.



Education should be a life-long process, and it is our belief that traveling in such a guided and learned manner supports that idea. We don't just visit another country; we study its customs, its culture, its history; we encourage our students to 'enter' into the mindset of the people of that country to develop that ever-important sense of empathy necessary to being both an educated and an ethical adult. Our students live in an international school in an international city in an international nation. Transforming that 'international mindedness' from the imaginary to the real informs our international travel program.

## MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

**O**n Wednesday, January 14, the third and fourth grades traveled to The Museum of Modern Art. Being that The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education Building just opened, the students walked into a brand new wing and were greeted by Chuck Close's self portrait. Chuck Close is an American Photorealist who works on a massive scale. Although he is severely paralyzed, he has continued to paint and produce work which remains sought after by museums and collectors.

The students were surprised when they saw a life size race car hanging on the wall. This was a bright red Ferrari Formula One race car which has a sleek and sculptured silhouette. One student, tongue in cheek, wanted to know how much tape they used to keep it hanging on the wall.

We were greeted by Mark, our docent, for the lesson on 'Places'. He told the class that artists sometimes paint places that they love. Vincent Van Gogh said, "To paint nature, one must live in it a long time." In 1889 he spent many months in Saint-Remy wandering about the olive tree groves when he painted *The Olive Trees*. The students commented that the sky, trees and land looked like waves on the water.

**H**enri Matisse's *The Red Studio* was the next 'place' to which Mark brought us. This painting showed his art studio in 1911 with many of his famous creations in the painting. Some students noticed that a sculpture in the painting was actually right behind us in the museum.

**F**inally, Tom Wesselmann's *Still Life # 30*, created in 1963, was a hit with everyone. This collage consisted of a pink refrigerator door, painted advertisements, plastic flowers, bottles of 7-UP and lots of food. If Mark was right, the kitchen was this artist's favorite place. Tom Wesselmann attended Cooper Union, a very prestigious art school in New York , and he is known for his Pop Art creations.

This was a great trip, and everyone developed a deeper appreciation of modern art. Each student was given a free pass for themselves and four family members. I hope all the passes are used and enjoyed.



*The Olive Trees* by Vincent Van Gogh

### Inaugural Activities —Continued from page 1

studied. In grades one through three, students also participated in learning about the country's new first family, as well as created invitations to actual Inauguration events. Cards and letter to the Obama children are now on their way to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

This monumental event was also observed by the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes as they viewed, as well as performed, an Inauguration reenactment. These students also expressed themselves creatively as they produced decorations of their own to enrich the atmosphere. The Lower Division did not allow this crucial event in our nation's history to pass by without abundant recognition as the administrators, teachers, and students came together and enjoyed a day of reverence.

Many thanks to parents who offered suggestions, provided resources and decorated the school. Indeed, our entire community recognizes the significance of this Inauguration!

### Stone Soup



First Grade put on a production of *Stone Soup* Wednesday morning as part of their Tell Me A Story reading theme. Prior to the show, they compared and contrasted many versions of this folktale, learned the lessons of sharing and teamwork, and cooked their own stone soup. To prepare for the play everyone worked hard to memorize lines, project voices, and speak with emotion. The class also designed the scenery. Parents and siblings joined us to enjoy the tale.

## Foundations Update

The 2009 Spring Foundations brochure is now available on our website. For your convenience, you can pick up a hard copy of the registration form in the main office or it can be downloaded from the "Programs" section of the site. Classes are beginning to fill up so be sure to enroll soon.



Afro-Cuban Hand Drumming comes to Saturdays... Andrea Pryor will be bringing a "Mommy & Me" version of this wonderful interactive workshop to the Jackson Heights community beginning in February. See Ms. Flanagan for details.



The demonstration classes for the upcoming Fantastic Tales and Improv Comedy will be held during the school day on Thursdays, January 22nd and January 29th respectively. This is an opportunity for children to try out a Foundations course and interact with the teaching artists before the course actually begins. Be sure to ask your child about the experience.



## GARDEN SCHOOL & SUMMER PROGRAMS

Established in 1923 An Independent Co-Ed College Prep  
Education Nursery through Grade 12  
Small classes - Traditional values - Flexible payment plans available

**Open House January 24, 2009**  
10am-Noon



- Average Class Size: 13
- Student Teacher Ratio - 11 to 1
- College counseling Ratio 15 to 1
- Affordable Tuition

- Nursery Program From Age 2
- College Counseling Program beginning in 9th grade
- Full Range of AP Courses
- Computer & Science Labs

- Dance Studio, Arts Center
- English Language Academy
- Gymnasium
- Member of NYSAIS
- Transportation available

### Full Day Camp Ages 3-13

June 29 - August 21, 2009

New this Summer  
Tada! Youth Theatre and Super Soccer Stars In residence for Summer 2009



- 4 to 8 Week Programs
- Extended Hours
- Outdoor Playground
- Arcade Game Room
- Large In Ground Pool



**Half Day Mini-Camp**  
Ages 3 to 5: 9am to Noon



**A Seamless Education**  
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## Garden School Reaches Out

### Notebook Software Training for Smartboard Users

By Kevin Burgoyne

Through our Faculty Development Program, Ms. Ingravalla and I were priveleged to attend a Smartboard Workshop this past Tuesday. The seminar trainer, introduced us to all the functions and benefits of Smartboard technology. Smartboard is a large white board connected via USB cable to a computer, which, through projection, displays the various functions you are using. The white board, a large touch screen on which your finger tip replaces a mouse, may be used as a standard computer, a classroom notebook, an interactive learning tool, a replacement to the traditional chalkboard, or an internet resource.

We were shown various ways to use the functions, as well as given suggestions for implementing the Smartboard into everyday lesson planning. For example, the Smartboard is a great way to organize, animate, and present notes, or make studying maps and concepts interactive. Along with everyday lesson planning, the Smartboard is an excellent tool for enhancing teaching practices for it is a program linked to many teaching resources via the internet.

This seminar is essential for teachers of schools intending to purchase Smartboards. The Smartboards are extraordinarily user friendly and operate similarly to the operating system it is connected with, such as Windows or Macintosh. The less technologically savvy individual should absolutely not shy away from this technology as it can only make lessons more exciting for the students. In addition, it is extremely easy to develop lesson plans that differentiate learning in accordance with the different learning levels present in any classroom, as well as develop lessons that communicate well through multiple intelligences.

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

### Coffee Time— By Lisa Sohmer

At Garden School, we know that you care about more than what your child is doing today. You care about what your child will be doing tomorrow.... and a few years from now. In order to support our families' interest in the future, we are launching a new "Coffee Series" to familiarize the parents and guardians of children throughout the lower and upper divisions with a variety of Garden's programs and plans.

This spring, we will host monthly morning coffees and invite you to attend any or all of them. Come to the library for coffee and conversation from 7:45 am to 8:40 am on the following dates:

- February 11: Coffee and College Counseling
- March 18: Coffee with the Coaches
- April 21: Coffee and Technology
- May 19: Coffee with the Trustees

If you have any questions about the Coffee Series, please contact Lisa Sohmer, Director of College Counseling, by phone or at [lsohmer@gardenschool.org](mailto:lsohmer@gardenschool.org)



## Blue & White Night & Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

Garden School PTA  
graciously invites you to its

**Blue and White Night**

*An evening of Wine and Cheese with a Silent Auction*  
Friday, February 6th, 2009  
7:30 PM

Garden School  
33-16 79th Street  
Jackson Heights, NY

*Tickets: \$15 in advance*  
*Limited number at door: \$20*

*Adults Only*

**SAVE THE DATE**

*Spring Fundraiser*  
*Saturday, April 18th, 2009*

**“Let’s Kill the Boss”**  
*Interactive*  
*Comedy Murder Mystery Dinner Theater*  
*@ Garden School*



## Garden School Dates to Remember

- Monday, January 19th - School Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Tuesday—Thursday, January 20-22—Upper Division Exams
- Thursday, January 22—Grade 5/6 Trip to Brooklyn Museum
- Friday, January 23—Marking Period # 2 Ends
- Saturday, January 24—Open House for School and Camp
- Wednesday, January 28—"Adopt An Acre" Jean Day
- Wednesday, January 28—PTA Meeting
- Thursday, January 29—Report Cards Distributed
- Friday, January 30—Report Cards Returned
- Friday, January 30- Language Club Bake Sale
- Tuesday, February 3- College Night for Juniors
- Thursday, February 5—"Operation Smile" Jean Day
- Friday, February 6—PTA Blue & White Night