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Garden School News

CIVILITY • RESPECT • HONESTY • KINDNESS



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Headmaster's Column



There are a number of occasions when someone inevitably asks, "Why did you go into teaching?" And the answer is.....

For most of us who have spent or are spending our lives in education, there really is no one single answer; the answers reflect the complexity of the teaching profession itself. Each teacher may emphasize one motivating force over another; yet all teachers share a degree of communality in their reasons for selecting a profession that brings great joy along with significant challenge.

Some teachers simply love the idea of working with children; for them, children reflect all the possibility and the progressive nature of human life. No child is ever complete; children, like schools, are works in progress and for a teacher to be present during the unfolding of that work brings great joy and great responsibility.

Others can trace the driving motivation to a love of the subject matter; for some this initial interest in a subject takes on a very special dimension. Whatever the subject may be, it

plays a very special role in the intellectual life of the teacher. For those of us who passionately love a subject, that subject becomes a filter through which we experience and interpret human existence.

Whether you have come to teaching initially out of a love of a subject or to have an impact on children, one thing is clear: the two fuse together within the daily life of teaching. Throughout the days and weeks of the school experience, teachers dedicate themselves to finding the balance between teaching a subject and teaching children; this is the balance that all teachers work diligently to attain. Anyone who has ever taught knows the care and preparation that attaining this balance requires.

Peter Elbow, in a book titled *Writing Without Teachers*, makes the point that the ultimate goal of a teacher is to become unnecessary to the learning process, because the students will have learned how to learn. What energizes us all is that once that happens, it begins again next class!

Upper Division Highlights

This has been a very busy two weeks for the Upper Division. On Monday, February 9, we held an Honor's Assembly for the second quarter marking period. Thirty-five students received honors (GPA=3.3, or higher) and Twenty eight received high honors (GPA=3.7, or higher). Congratulations to all!

On Wednesday, February 11, we held our twelfth annual Poetry Recitation; this year's featured poet was William Butler Yeats. Students from all English classes compete in trials to be a finalist. Thirty-eight students performed in the recitation.

Our basketball teams have done very well this season. As of today, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity have made the playoffs;

Lower Division Updates

The Nursery class has been talking about Valentine's Day. Each child has made a special Valentine's gift for family members. Stories about Valentine's Day have been read to the class. The children have also been learning about the colors red and pink. They have painted with watercolors on pink paper and decorated it with red and pink hearts. The letter 'F' for February has been the letter of the month. Each child decorated a pink letter 'F' with pink and red foam shapes.

The month of February is probably the busiest month of the year for the Pre-K students. The children have made special Valentine gifts for their parents, complete with red handprints and a heart warming hand-

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College Night for Juniors

It was cold and snowy, but more than 60 people braved the storm to take part in this year's College Night for Juniors. The group, composed of juniors and their parents and guardians, enjoyed the opportunity to listen to presentations – and have their questions answered— as part of this annual event.

The evening's panelists were Richard P. Alvarez, Director of University Admissions for CUNY; Kevin Cavanagh, Asst. VP for College Admissions for Iona College; and Sarah Richardson, Asst. Director of Admissions for Fordham University. After briefly describing their home institutions and the programming there, they discussed a variety of topics from preparing for the SAT to freshman orientation. By the evening's end, the juniors had heard about many issues that will arise over the next 18 months. They left feeling informed and excited about getting started.

College Night is just the beginning for the juniors. After the break, they will schedule individual family conferences to plan their college searches, learn about ways to maximize their time at the college fair and become more aware of the opportunities that await them at Garden School throughout the year.

In truth, the Class of 2010 has been preparing for college for years. In every grade at Garden, the lessons about responsibility, character and most of all, a love of learning, have readied the juniors for the college process and college itself.



Information...with milk & sugar

At Garden School, we know that the sharing of information is critical to the success of the home-school partnership. To that end, we are always looking for ways to enhance the interaction between the school and the parents and guardians of all our students.

On February 12, the first of Garden's new "coffees" was held in the library. At 7:45am, a group of parents joined Lisa Sohmer for "Coffee and College Counseling," an overview of Garden's process and insight into how Garden prepares students for college at every grade level. The meeting included an extensive question and answer period.

Please join us on March 18 for "Coffee with the Coaches," when our school staff, Mr. Vann, Mr. Chung, Ms. Kohen and Mr. Kruczek will discuss the Garden School athletic program and the broad benefits of participating in sports.



JH Poetry Festival

On the evening of Thursday, January 29th, the Jackson Heights Poetry Festival gathered in Garden's Henry Roberts Library for their second quarterly workshop, moderated by Jackson Heights poet and Professor at Nassau Community College, Richard Jeffrey Newman and led by prominent poet Nathalie Handal.

The workshop inspired the participants to write three poems, and to share them, all inhibitions aside. It offered a feeling of community for the diverse collection of people and fostered creativity.

The Jackson Heights Poetry Festival hosts quarterly workshops and a three day poetry festival, on March 14-16, 2009, held at Garden School. The next workshop will feature Marty McConnell, and will be held on March 26, 2009. The JHPF also holds monthly open readings, the FIRST TUESDAYS series, which is held at Terraza Cafe on 40-19 Gleane St. Elmhurst, NY 11373 (right near the 7 train 82nd street stop).

You can find more information on the JHPF, including how to join or support the events, at www.jhpfest.org.

Lower Division Updates—Continued from page 1

print poem.

Dental health has been the focus of the Pre-K Science classes. The children have been learning how to take care of their teeth using the proper brushing techniques as well as learning about healthy eating habits. Each student received a coloring book from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services designed to teach about the importance of calcium for building strong teeth and a healthy body.

The Pre-K students have been busy getting ready for Presidents' Day during their Social Studies classes. They enjoyed learning about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. They made George Washington stories and Abraham Lincoln books.

Officer Shawn, from a local precinct, came to visit the Pre-K and Kindergarten classes as well as grades 1 to 3. He spoke to the children about being safe and how he helps patrol our community. He showed everyone his cuffs, flashlight and baton and had a question and answer time.

The Kindergarten students have been keeping up with the very busy February calendar, too. Groundhog's Day puppets, learning about Abraham Lincoln and making Valentines have been only a few of the Social Studies and Science activities. The children are also writing sentences and learning about verbs. Everyone is excited and looking forward to the winter recess.

First graders are beginning to develop their research skills with a study of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt, the presidents featured on coins. The process began by looking at what information the children already knew about the president. The next step was to write questions they would like to discover the answers to. Then during social studies and computer classes we found the answers and other interesting facts about the men. After gathering the information, students designed a new monument to honor one of the presidents and wrote a plaque to accompany it.

Second graders are currently writing journal entries from the perspective of either Abraham Lincoln, an escaped slave, an abolitionist or a Civil Rights activist. Students are learning the significance of, and singing, old slave songs such as "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and continue to explore the famous Sioux quotation: "Let me not judge a man unless I have walked a mile in his moccasins" by acting out scenes in which someone is being treated unfairly because of the color of skin, their religion or being bullied because of differences. Second graders are also learning about the his-



tory of St. Valentine and will be given the opportunity to write their own story about how the holiday came to be. By learning about the prejudices against religion during St. Valentine's time and racial prejudices during the Civil Rights movement, students are grasping the universal theme of compassion and tolerance.

The third grade has begun a poetry unit in Language Arts. They have been writing rhyming couplets and tercets about animals and nature. In combination with their studies of multiplication, they are writing math multiplication poems. This cross-curricular activity reinforces the concepts of couplets and tercets as well as multiplication facts.

Well rounded students learn more than just core academic areas. The fine arts are an integral part of a sophisticated scholar's resume. The Music and Art departments have been hard at work exposing students to a variety of skills.

The fourth and fifth grades have been practicing the recorders. Through musical participation, they grasp concepts such as form, melody, and harmony. The fourth graders have been busying themselves with rhythmic composition, utilizing classroom percussion instruments. Sixth graders have been performing improvisational acts in preparation for their upcoming spring production. They have also been learning the international musical instruments classification system.

In art, students just completed a unit on the sculptor, Rodin. They replicated the famous statue of "The Thinker" in ceramic and are currently studying the artist, Count Henri Toulouse-Lautrec. Students are implementing his style while creating advertisement posters. Students are learning about centering and shape and type manipulation.



Nursery Program

The Nursery Program at Garden School provides a wide range of fun and exciting learning experiences for 2 and 3 year olds. The nursery classroom is a hub of activity during the school day. The children have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, story time, music, circle time, and different kinds of movement activities. The children have plenty of time for socializing with their classmates, free play, venturing outside to the school playground as often as the weather permits.

The children in the nursery enjoy starting their day building cities out of blocks, drawing pictures with crayons, or “cooking” in one of the kitchen areas. After everyone has settled in, everybody cleans up together, and the class sits down for circle time. Circle time is a time for singing favorite songs, seeing who came to school that day and checking the weather to decide whether or not it is a good day to go outside to the playground. After circle time and morning snack, the class gathers together for story time to listen to favorite books, to experience letters, sounds and words and to begin the reading and writing process.



Nursery students enjoy being able to create things during arts and crafts. The children can be found involved in individual art projects such as painting, gluing, collage, or crafting characters from favorite stories. They also enjoy working together to create murals related to different themes. All work is done by the children with the exception of the cutting, which is done by the teachers. The classroom is always decorated with the children’s work, which they proudly show to anyone who visits the class.

Children in the nursery class love to move, and they get active in a variety of ways each day. They can often be found dancing, stretching, and doing aerobics such as jumping jacks, running in place and pretending to swim. Their favorite way to move in the classroom is to imitate animals that they are familiar with such as hopping bunnies, flying birds, and crawling turtles. The children enjoy incorporating music into the mix by having a “marching band” during which they get to march around the room playing instruments. Different types of music are played throughout the day for dancing and also just as an auditory experience.

As the morning draws to a close, the class sits down

to have lunch together. After lunch, the morning students go home and the full-day students take a nap. Once the children awaken from their naps, it is time for another snack, some more socializing and individual activities before it is time to go home for the day.

The nursery program appeals to a wide range of students and parents. Flexible hours, a strong curriculum, a low student-to-teacher ratio, and a pleasing facility contribute to the popularity of this program, with enrollment continuing to increase. Ms. Emily has recently joined the Garden School staff as a teacher in the nursery. She joins Ms. Lilly and Ms. Marissa in providing child-centered, nurturing activities for all of the children. Ms. Emily enjoys singing, music, movement and art activities. We are happy to welcome her to the program.

Curriculum Guide & Handbook

A unique feature of Garden School is its status as a Nursery through Twelfth grade school, with a seamless educational program. Recently a *Scope and Sequence* and *Curriculum Guide* have been assembled in print form, along with a *Handbook* for families.

These were distributed during the General Assembly held on February 10th and will also be available shortly on our website.

If families are interested in receiving these publications, stop by the main office or email Ms. Petruso at mpetruso@gardenschool.org

Blue & White Night

This year’s Blue & White Night did not disappoint us—once again our Garden School families, friends and staff came together to enjoy an evening of wine & cheese, many great silent auction items and a new 50/50 raffle. We were treated to the melodic tones of Ms. Cate Song (an American Idol contestant and friend of the Glus family).

The event raised nearly \$13,000 for our school. Thanks to all the parents and students who worked tirelessly and made this a night to remember.



Cate Song @ Blue & White Night

*Upper Division Highlights**Cont. from Page 1*

Middle School Girls are one win away from qualifying for a playoff position.

This week was quite a week for the Upper Division Travel Program. Last night, seventeen Gardenites, led by Mr. Pigman, Mrs. Elkind, Mrs. Reyes and Ms. Saran left for Ireland. Today, eighteen Gardenites leave for Spain; the Spanish trip is under the supervision of Ms Smith, Mrs. Prio and Mr. Feraco. This international travel program, which began in 1994 with a trip to England, has been a very significant curriculum enrichment innovation to our school. We know that creating a state of imagination, known as international-mindedness, can develop our students as learners and thinkers in deep and complex ways.

For those of you looking for an interesting book to read during the break—follow Mr. Pigman’s lead. In his world novel class, students are reading *Palace Walk*, by the Nobel prize winning Egyptian novelist, Naguib Mafouz. *Palace Walk* is set in Cairo and follows the daily experiences of an upper middle class Egyptian family as they live through the complex circumstances created by English imperialism. Mr. Pigman’s class has been enjoying the reading experience for many reason aside from the fact the Mafouz is such a great writer; they have the chance to follow the day to day life of a family that has been affected in some subtle ways by the shear force of political power while at the same time holding onto their values.

Murder Mystery
Dinner Theatre**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, February 16th to Friday, February 20—
School Closed for Winter Break
- Monday, February 23rd—Classes Resume
- Friday, February 29—International Club Bake Sale
- Monday, March 2—Senior Raffle Begins
- Friday, March 6—Spirit Week Dance

GARDEN SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM

Located in the Heart of Queens

Bordering the Jackson Heights Historic District




**33-16 79th Street
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(718) 335-6363
www.gardenschool.org
SUMMER 2009**

Summer in the Garden

For Children Ages 2-13
Monday, June 29 through Friday, August 21

- Nursery
Full and Half Day Programs
- Juniors 3 – 6
Full and Half Day Programs
- Specialty Options —Ages 7 to 13

Weeks 1&2	TADA! Youth Theatre www.tadatheater.com Super Soccer Stars www.supersoccerstars.com Young Scientists
OR	
OR	
Weeks 3&4	Awesome Artists First Shot Basketball www.firstshotbasketball.com Reading, Writing and Math Adventures
OR	
OR	
Weeks 5&6	TADA! Youth Theatre www.tadatheater.com Super Soccer Stars www.supersoccerstars.com Young Scientists
OR	
OR	
Weeks 7&8	Awesome Artists First Shot Basketball www.firstshotbasketball.com Reading, Writing and Math Adventures

Plus.....Red Cross Swim Instruction, Arcade Game Room, Arts & Crafts, Field Activities

Lunch and Snacks included for Full and Half Day (AM) Campers
Pricing Available for Door to Door Transportation
Camp Hours: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Pricing Available for Extended Day: 7:30 am to 6:00 pm

Summer 2009 Rates

- Full Day Program—9:00 am to 4:00 pm
\$450 per week
- Discounted Rate for Full 8 week Program
\$3,400

**Coming Soon.....
Summer Saturday Demo Classes
Date to Follow!!!**