



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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Thoughts for the Week



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



As we move closer toward our Gala next Friday night, I can feel the excitement building for our event. When I think about the Gala, I think of the extraordinary amount of work that goes into making something like this happen, and even more astonishingly, that most of this work is done by volunteers! Yet I should not be so surprised, since that is the nature of independent schools in general and one of the wonderful aspects of Garden School in particular.

What is important from a curriculum point of view, especially when we consider the important role of social education within the context of our school community, is that the idea of volunteering remains part of our larger goals for student development. Whether they are giving their efforts to an athletic team, the Math or the Debate Teams, or to Key Club or a club of their own design, we want our students, and our families, to

understand the importance of working with others to give to others, of helping the community and to recognize the larger world beyond their immediate surroundings. This "social involvement" is a central and essential part of our educational mission and vision.

For our students, the idea of volunteering emerges early with classroom jobs such as being responsible line leaders and door holders. These seemingly simple acts, in which the students often demonstrate great pride of accomplishment, naturally grow their sense of responsibility to the world around them, which they themselves come to recognize and accept. Later, Garden students help this community and their larger community regularly through their efforts in world relief programs, in raising funds for children with leukemia and diabetes, and in volunteering outside of school in programs for the elderly and with special needs children. So many of our students give of themselves on a weekly and sometimes daily basis to others.

For me this is part of the curriculum. To learn about history, math or science, English, art, music, and language truly means to learn about the world. All education points toward the outside; then moves back inside. So that a student who learns about history—a time and place not his or her own—learns about the other, but then uses that knowledge to self-reflect and move inward. Learning modulates between the exterior and the interior, between the subject and the object, and between the self and the other. Understanding this duality frames the value of volunteering within the context of learning. Queens College's motto is *Discimus ut serviamus*: which translates as *we learn so that we may serve*. That is a true educational goal.