



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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"Cultivating Success in Every Child"

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Thoughts for the Week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



Throughout the course of this school year, Garden School has implemented a Character Education Program as a part of daily school life. The four values that guided the Program were kindness, honesty, inclusion and independence. Together these values help to guide a personal and social attitude, to shape our community's environment, and to better define this community culture. The strength of these values support our community as we work together harmoniously and successfully.

The closing value for the year, which embodies the others as well, is independence. For us at Garden, independence remains a central part of daily school life. Institutionally, as an independent school, our very reason for being, and indeed our success, is based on our ability to express our educational beliefs separate from bureaucratic interference, and demonstrating the effectiveness of these beliefs through our program, our work with the students each day, and ultimately in producing graduates with the capacity to be successful and productive in our twenty-first century world. Likewise, our purpose as educators (and parents!) is to encourage age-appropriate independence as our students are supported in the process of assuming greater amounts of responsibility for their own education and achievements.

We also recognize that developing independence means recognizing the value of both the individual and the group; the partnerships that are formed within the groups enhance our community and enrich our individual experience. I believe it is these partnerships which make Garden School so effective as a learning institution. We encourage independence in our activities (teams, clubs, etc.), in our curriculum (open and critical expression of ideas), and in our mission (as we empower our students to succeed in our world).

Now is the time to reflect on the core values that we explored throughout the year. Kindness is part of our daily lives in school on all levels: as individuals, as community members, and as citizens of the world. It governs the way in which we interact with others and with the community around us. Honesty is essential to our intellectual and personal wellbeing. As mentioned before, honesty runs the gamut from academic honesty, to social honesty and to personal self-reflective honesty. It is crucial that we are honest with ourselves, and not assign our responsibility to others, either out of fear or pain. Honest self-reflection, while sometimes uncomfortable, makes us stronger in recognizing the truth of our lives. Independence takes the lead in helping us develop our inner strength so that we can function both on our own, and with the confidence to function with others. Independence leads directly to inclusion, honesty and kindness, which, at its optimum, allows us to accept and genuinely collaborate and cooperate with others. These values hold a prescription for daily and life success.

As we move toward the end of the school year, we keep these values in mind and in our hearts. Living them each day allows us to create the community and the world in which we want to live and fulfill our mission.