



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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## ***Thoughts for the Week***

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



This has been a very important and dynamic week at Garden School: a week in which we have seen students organize efforts for the people affected by the earthquake in Ecuador, Student Council campaigning and elections taking place, and a week in which our fourth graders will have their first sleepover, following their trip to the Caumsett Environmental Center.

All of these activities correspond to our character trait of independence, which is our guiding value for the fourth quarter. Independence has many facets, among them are taking responsibility for oneself and for others, being able to manage a degree of freedom and competing for the leadership of the Upper Division. Each of these activities requires a degree of independence.

The extraordinary efforts to organize relief efforts for Ecuador, initiated and led by Aneesh D. '18, demonstrates a considerable amount of independence in first making the decision to respond with action to the needs of others and then in actually putting together a plan that includes donations of candles and batteries and other supplies, of cash donations and in organizing a faculty/parent/ student soccer match this afternoon at 3:00pm in our Gym. These activities were the result of independent student actions. It was the students who proposed the relief efforts; it was the students who planned the events, and it was the students who participated in the events themselves. This was an act of independence designed to care for others.

For the past few weeks, Student Council election campaigning has been underway. This is a time in which next year's seniors campaign for the role of President and Vice President of the Student Council. Declaring oneself a candidate means taking on the responsibility of conducting a campaign, of designing a platform of offerings/activities for next year and in making a serious commitment to the students and the school. This requires a great deal of independent thinking that underscores the element of responsibility within the concept of independence.

Finally, our fourth graders are embarking on a very exciting journey today. First, by visiting the Caumsett Environmental Center they face some of the issues involved in the complex struggle to preserve our natural environment. This is more than a pleasure trip for them, it is a journey into independence and responsibility. To study the environment means to take responsibility for the study's results. This can be an example for them in which learning something compels them into doing something. Their independence will be stretched further by the first school organized sleepover tonight at Garden School. For many of them and their parents, this is their first night away from home and family. This certainly encourages and stretches their sense of independence.

All of these school-generated and student-generated activities support the value of independence and responsibility. And these values and how they help promote the "academic achievement, personal responsibility and social involvement" that leads to the self-worth necessary to succeed, is what the Garden School mission is all about.