



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

Friday, January 16, 2015



## ***Thoughts for the week***

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



As I look over our plans for this year and next year, I am mindful of the role that self-reflection plays in the process of school growth, development and improvement. The very idea of self-reflection leads to subsequent values and opportunities. Even when the process raises uncomfortable issues, the fact that the issue is there, opened up for discussion and then, best of all, for a positive resolution, makes self-reflection important and necessary for any institutional movement.

Affecting change in schools has always been a complex process because of the passionate involvement of the stakeholders, of tradition, of the concern for the individual and of the importance of incorporating the most significant of modern practices. In the world of best practices, being able to assess the nature of an institution through the direct input from stakeholders provides a far more precise way of assessing and implementing change.

Some of the reasoning behind the Parent Survey that you received by email this week emerges from this desire to reflect on the practices within our institution and use those reflections to grow and develop our performance. Next year, when we embark upon our self-study year in preparation for our NYS AIS accreditation, the goal of that intense self-reflection will be to analyze those insights and transform them into concrete programmatic advances.

I think that it is fair to say that growth and improvement take their impetus from input from both within and without the community. The goal of every school should be to work diligently to improve its practices, its environment, to enhance its ability to fulfill stated goals and always to make certain the philosophy and practice are in a direct alignment.

Change-growth-self-assessment—these are the hallmarks of the pathway to the comprehensive and positive evolution of an institution. The more the honesty in the process of self evaluation, the more positive the resultant change and alteration may be.

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Current core program parents, if you have not already done so, please click on the link and complete the 5-10 minute Garden School Parent Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P7GQWN2>



## DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Monday, January 19 : School Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. **SERVICE DAY! No RSVP, details below.**
- Tuesday, January 20 – Thursday, January 22 : Upper Division Midterm Exams
- Friday, January 23 : End of Second Marking Period
- Thursday, January 29 : Report Cards Distributed
- Friday, January 30 : Report Cards Returned
- College Night for the Class of 2016 6:00 PM
- Thursday, February 12 : International Trip Departs
- Monday, February 16 – Friday, February 20 : School Closed for February Break
- Monday, February 23 : School Resumes



## IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!

The Garden School Gala will take place on Friday March 27, 2015 at Terrace on the Park!  
Gala info, Journal Ad and auction donation forms: <http://www.gardenschool.org/gala/>



MLK Day of Service honors Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and teachings of justice through the principles of nonviolence. We will celebrate Dr. King with volunteer projects that strengthen our community. Mitzvah Day is in the Jewish tradition of *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world by reaching out to others in their hour of need and enriching their lives and the community as a whole.

*Join us for a day of inspiration & action*

Monday, Jan. 19, 2015  
Program starts 10:30 a.m.  
Followed by day of service activities.

The Renaissance  
Charter School  
35-59 81st St.  
Jackson Heights, NY

*A light breakfast at 10 a.m. will be provided.*

**Please support our food drive. Bring non-perishable, canned or packaged food (No glass bottles.)**

Sponsoring organizations: *Kebillat Tikvah*; a Jewish Community of Hope; Community United Methodist Church; St. Mark's Episcopal Church/Lion's Share Food Pantry; The Renaissance Charter School; Jackson Heights Beautification Group; Muhammad Center; Regal Heights Rehabilitation and Health Care Center; Chhaya; Senator Jose Peralta; Council Member Daniel Drommi; Friends of Diversity Plaza; the Garden School; JASA (Jewish Association Serving the Aging and other members of the Jackson Heights community.

Contact Peggy Heeney at 718-803-0060 x111 or [pheeney@renaissancecharter.org](mailto:pheeney@renaissancecharter.org). On weekends, Eileen Pentel, 718-569-1887 also check <http://tikvah.wordpress.com/>

## MLK Day of Service **THIS MONDAY!!**

The Garden School Key Club, the Student Council and the PTA worked together to support this event with a great turnout of students, their families, faculty, staff and alumni.

**Monday the 19th is a national holiday and Garden will be closed. So instead, please join us at The Renaissance Charter School** for breakfast at 10:00 am, or a bit later if you want to skip breakfast and just be of service. If you can only stay an hour or two, that's fine! Come and represent Garden School and show you care about enriching your community.

Bring non-perishable canned goods or packaged food and **wear some Garden blue!** Most of all, show up!

Questions to [jgaines@gardenschool.org](mailto:jgaines@gardenschool.org)



## ***Pajama Day for Early Childhood***

***By: Carmela Knopf, Eileen Reyes and Kristen Ahlfeld (Nursery, PreK and K Teachers)***

In the coldest, darkest days of winter, the students bring new energy and enthusiasm to school with Pajama Day. The children from the Early Childhood Department loved coming to school this Friday in their pajamas with their favorite bedtime story books and stuffed toy. Pajama Day is a fun way to include families in the classroom and reinforce reading at home.

New friends were made when the students from grades 1-5 took the time to read books to the nursery, pre-k, and kindergarten classes. Pajama Day also provides the casual atmosphere and comfort zone for older children to read aloud to younger students. There are many benefits of “buddy reading” for both the younger and older students. For younger students, reading aloud helps with language acquisition and literacy skills, while the older students gain fluency and confidence in having someone look up to them. Students in all grades made great literary connections among the variety of authors and illustrators shared. With breakfast for lunch and pajama day crafts, we had a very fun literature-filled Friday!



## ***Community Building for Grades 1 to 3***

***By: Jacquelyn Renner, Stephanie Parker and Nilla Ingravallo (Grades 1, 2 and 3 Teachers)***

The First, Second and Third Graders worked on community building activities during a blended cluster event. The students traveled between the classrooms to study Reading, Science and Language Arts with a winter theme!

The recent cold weather was the perfect atmosphere for a polar bear experiment. After imagining how polar bears would look wearing hats, scarves, and jackets, the students used the scientific method to discover what keeps polar bears and other arctic animals warm. They followed the steps of asking a question, making a hypothesis, conducting the experiment, observing the results, and drawing a conclusion. We wanted to find out what keeps polar bears warm. Hypotheses included thick skin, fur, and blubber. Each student placed their hands into a bowl of icy water. One hand was uncovered. The other was inside of the “blubber” glove. After five seconds students observed that the hand inside the glove was warmer than the uncovered hand. Everyone’s conclusion was that the blubber under the polar bears’ skin keeps them warm.



We also viewed a PowerPoint presentation that gave many interesting facts about polar bears. They are the largest land predators. Polar bears do not hibernate. They can swim up to 100 miles at a time and when they come out of the water; their oily fur repels the water for a quick dry. We attempted to visualize a ten foot tall polar, equal to 3 students standing on each other’s shoulders!



Mrs. Parker led a Language Arts activity on adjectives. After looking at photographs of a penguin waddling and a polar bear swimming, the students were able to brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe each photograph. They then took basic sentences and added adjectives to make them more descriptive and interesting. The older students were able to define words for younger students. They also provided them with synonyms to help make their definitions clear. Then the students worked together to brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe snowmen. They cut and colored snowmen and wrote the adjectives on their pictures. It was wonderful to see the students sharing ideas and teaching one another!



Ms. Ingravallo led a Reading activity where the students worked on utilizing directions to produce a final product. The students learned how to collect materials for the project and how to follow the written steps to create snowflakes. During this lesson, the third graders were each paired with a first grader and/or second grader. The third grade students, who had previously made different types of snowflakes by reading a procedural text called *Let's Make Snowflakes*, helped their partners make unique paper snowflakes by reading instructions.

This collaborative activity gave the First, Second, and Third Grade cluster the opportunity to strengthen their teamwork and communication skills. The students enjoyed working with their peers and viewing winter in various ways.

## ***Foreign Language for Grades 4 to 6***

***By: Gabriel Gomis (Foreign Language Teacher)***

The 4th Grade French class just wrapped up the "er" verbs and they should be able to use the most common "er" verbs to make good sentences. In addition, we also learned the seasons and students can now comment upon the weather.

We wrapped up adjectives in 5th Grade so they had a test this week to assess their understanding of adjectives. Group conversation sessions were organized to strengthen their understanding of the adjectives. This coming week, they will review their French food vocabulary to prepare for their trip to *Jubilee*, a French restaurant in Manhattan.

Sixth grade students learned about telling the time in French and were assessed on their knowledge of the topic this week. They will also be headed for a day-trip to the Museo del Barrio and *Jubilee*.

## ***History for Grade 7***

***By: Richard Kruczek (History Teacher)***

It has been a really exciting few weeks for us. First, the students have just completed the midterm, their first foray into a test of this length. Having prepared diligently for a week prior, I have no doubt that they passed this stern test with flying colors! As for where we are, the students have just finished the Era of Good Feelings. It was a pivotal epoch, one that set foreign policy for decades to come, as well as placed the nation on the road towards civil war. As always, the students were enthusiastic and eager to find out all they could about this time period.

Next up: the Age of Jackson. I can't wait to pick up where we left off!



## ***History for Grade 8***

***By: Sarah O'Sullivan (History Teacher)***

These wonderful intellectuals have completed an intriguing unit on Japan. Students analyzed the size of the nation as well as the physical geography. Lively discussions were held as we analyzed the significance of rugged terrain and limited arable lands. Many realized how this led to families feuding for control over vital lands and eventually the rise of Feudal Japan.

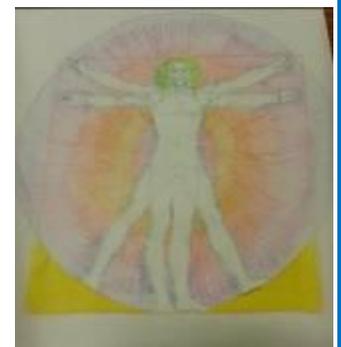
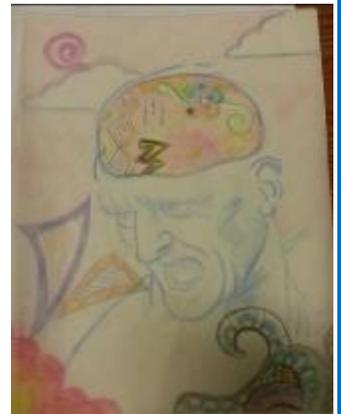
International trade was a blessing and a curse for this majestic nation. It brought new ideas and technology and most importantly universal education which leads social mobility. Unfortunately, it also showed how natural resources were necessary for a modern nation and thus led to expansion into nearby nations. Many students commented on how militarism can become a major component of this expansion. Others realized how people can learn from the difficulties of a nation's past and can then work towards a peaceful tomorrow.

## ***Art for Grades 9 and 10***

***By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)***

The Renaissance Art Students have completed the course and have placed all their sketches together into a booklet complete with a front cover which is completely of their choice. Now that the work is done, memories of all the images from the Renaissance come flooding back. Many of the students have voiced a desire to go to Rome and see the chapel ceiling for themselves.

I am amazed at the creativity and effort that each and every student in this class has shown in their work. My mouth drops open and "Wow" is all I can say to many of the projects that have been presented. I am very pleased with the quality and imagination of the work this semester. I ask visiting Alumni about their booklets and I always get the answer, "Of course I have it. It is on my bookshelf along with all of my favorite Garden books." I'm so happy that the Renaissance booklets are kept and treasured.



## ***Physical Education for Grades 11 and 12***

***By: Amy Ledden (Physical Education Teacher)***

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders are excited to begin their new (and favorite) unit: Badminton! The students are paired up with a partner for doubles and rotate to ensure that every pair plays every team. The serving team must successfully get their birdie to the other side of the net, and the teams continue to hit back and forth until the birdie lands on the floor. The point is then awarded to the opposing team, or the team who last successfully hit the birdie over the net. The students play until seven and you must win by two.

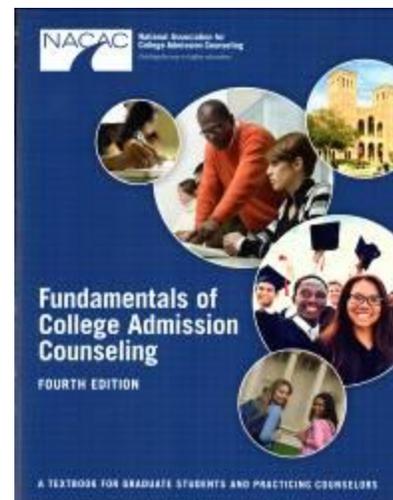
After midterms, the students will come back and enter a tournament based on the number of wins their team has. Good luck to everyone!



## **Garden School's Lisa Sohmer Published**

Lisa Sohmer, Director of College Counselor and Upper Division Coordinator, was selected to write "College Counseling: Making It Work," a chapter in *Foundations of College Admission Counseling*, a textbook published by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC).

The textbook, which was published this month, will be used by working professionals and by graduate students across the United States.



## **GARDEN SCHOOL YEARBOOK**

Dear Parents and Students,

Just a friendly reminder to get your Garden School 2014/15 Yearbook order in! Also, did you know that you can have your very own dedication pages? Please open the attachments to see examples of dedications and friendship pages. Your pages will be printed in every yearbook!

Students can also design pages and share the costs with the friends, teammates etc.!

To order click [http://www.jostens.com/apps/store/productDetail/1054215/Garden-School/Yearbook/2014082404164079370/CATALOG\\_SHOP/YB\\_BOOKS/All-Color-Yearbook/2014082404164082370/](http://www.jostens.com/apps/store/productDetail/1054215/Garden-School/Yearbook/2014082404164079370/CATALOG_SHOP/YB_BOOKS/All-Color-Yearbook/2014082404164082370/)

by the January 26th deadline.

Order today, time and space are limited!

Thank you!

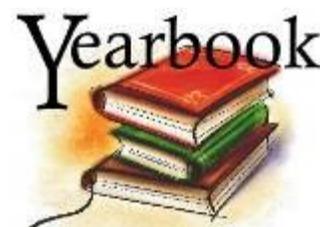
Garden PTA

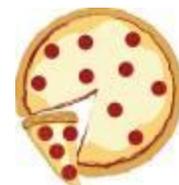
**Follow Garden School on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/gardenschoolnyc>**

## **Garden School Robotics Team Video, January 2015**

Click this link below and enjoy this short video that was filmed during last Wednesday's session.

[http://youtu.be/oX3vYY\\_1Pt0](http://youtu.be/oX3vYY_1Pt0)





## DREAMING OF WARM WEATHER YET??

**We are!**

The Garden School Gala is just around the corner and you know what that means??

### **POOL & PIZZA PARTY COMPETITION!!**

This year's competition will have a first place AND second place winner for the lower and upper school with a tie breaker for those close calls...

**First place prize** is a pool/pizza party for your class.

**Second place prize** is a class ice cream party.

You will learn more about how to earn points for your class later  
but don't wait until then to earn points!

**GET STARTED NOW** and earn **EXTRA POINTS** for your class!

From now until February break (2/13/15), you can earn 5 points (usually one point each) for every personal journal ad you buy or sell for the Garden School Gala Journal

**or**

your class can earn 25 points (usually 10 points) for a class journal ad purchased.

To get more information, purchase an ad now, or get the necessary forms for soliciting ads, please go to [www.gardenschool.org/gala](http://www.gardenschool.org/gala) or email us at [gala@gardenschool.org](mailto:gala@gardenschool.org)

**\*\*Already purchased an ad?\***

Don't worry! We will honor your support of Garden School  
with the same deal!