



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

Volume 92 Number: XIV

"Academic Excellence Since 1923"

Friday, January 9, 2015



Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



In the October Newsletter, I wrote about the importance of communication in the life of an independent school. Nothing is more important to the success of the educational institution than active and dynamic communication. There are moments when communication is specific to a child's progress, and other moments that affect the growth and development of a school.

All of the literature about independent school mentions the importance of the bond between families and school in the success of the student. Not only are parents a truly important partner in educating children, they often act as the conduit for information and to implement plans that insure the student's success. At Garden, communication is highly valued and it occurs in a variety of ways: parent conferences, planned and impromptu meetings, telephone calls, emails, newsletter and teacher pages on *Think Wave*.

Another vitally important aspect of school communication occurs between the school itself and the parent body. Schools need to inform parents on a regular basis about trends in education, about plans for change within the school, about soliciting parent input on important school issues.

To that end, Garden School is embarking on a parent survey to gather information and viewpoints that will help shape our school's future growth. The information gathered from this survey will allow us to conduct strategic planning with some direct knowledge of our parent experience. Please participate and share your viewpoints with us. I have reprinted the email below that was sent to all parents about the survey, which explains some of the details involved.

In our continuing effort to improve you and your child's experience at Garden School, I am pleased to announce that next week you will be receiving a short online survey to complete. The survey will arrive via email with a link to the survey which should be completed in one sitting and should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete, depending on your responses. You will not be asked for your name or grade level and all responses will be anonymous and entirely confidential.

Your participation and feedback from all grade levels is important and will help guide the school's approach to improving your family and child's experience. I am asking ALL parents to participate in this survey and to be complete and straightforward in your responses. This is your chance to let the school know what we are doing well, and what you and your student enjoys, and, of course, what we can improve upon and what you would like to see changed, added or removed. Comment boxes will be available for constructive suggestions where applicable.

Thank you for your participation, trust and cooperation and for being a part of improving our school.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Tuesday, January 13: PTA Meeting, Garden Library 6:30 PM All parents welcome!
- Thursday, January 15 – Friday, January 16 : Upper Division Midterm Exams
- Friday, January 16 : Lower Division Pajama Day
- Monday, January 19 : School Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. **MLK Day of Service at 10:00 AM**
- 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



IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!



The Garden School Gala will take place on Friday March 27, 2015 at Terrace on the Park



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: *Kehillat 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; Mohammadi Center; Regal Heights Rehabilitation and Health Care Center; Chhaya; Senator Jose Peralta; Council Member Daniel Dromm; 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. On weekends, Eileen Pentel, 718-569-1887 also check <http://jltikvah.wordpress.com/>

MLK Day of Service

In keeping with our school mission value of "social involvement", Garden School is delighted to be a local sponsor for this community event. Garden has always had a tradition of community service and volunteering both locally, nationally and abroad. For this event, the Garden School Key Club, the Student Council and the PTA are coming 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



Music for Early Childhood

By: Tom Heineman (Music Teacher)

Congratulations to all lower division students on their performance at the Winter Show! The bulk of the songs performed by early childhood students were circus-related, as Old MacDonald has given up farming and now runs a circus in one of Nursery's show numbers. Pre-K's opening song, entitled 'The Circus,' introduced the audience to things they would see in a circus, and students also sang a few songs concerning animals found under the big top. Kindergarten even sang a song about a particular fictional circus animal, 'Nellie the Elephant,' who 'packed her trunk and said goodbye to the circus.' One final act involved Kindergarten pulling something across the stage with a large rope while the circus master speculated as to what it might be (an elephant? a clown car? a tank of seals?). The second time they appear, Kindergarten is tugged across the stage as it is revealed that they were pulling themselves.

In the wake of the show, students have been learning several new songs such as 'The Farmer in the Dell,' 'Little Bunny Foo Foo,' 'Aiken Drum,' and 'Camptown Races,' along with studying and playing new instruments such as the triangle.

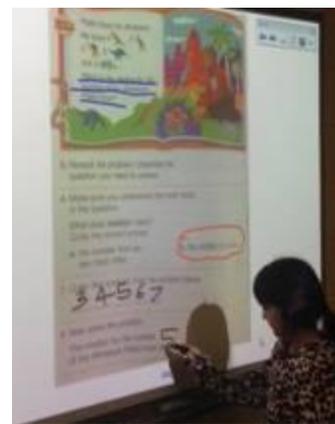
Math for Grade 1

By: Jacquelyn Renner (Grade 1 Teacher)

First graders have been busy collecting and interpreting data in our current math chapter. The students gain experience in counting, comparing data, and reading charts.

They have classified and sorted shapes by color and size using a Venn diagram. A Venn diagram shows the relationship between or among groups. Overlapping circles are used to display information that falls into two categories. Students were then introduced to tally charts. Data from tally charts was used to make pictographs and bar graphs. After creating bar and pictographs, students were able to add and subtract to interpret data from the graphs. The second grade volunteered to be part of the First Grade survey. Each First Grader wrote a survey question and conducted the survey with the Second Grade. The data was recorded on a tally chart. Each student organized his or her data on either a pictograph or a bar graph and wrote a question their class could answer by reading the graph.

This week First Grade was introduced to range, mode, and median. Using the *Smartboard*, the class learned to order a set of numbers to find how far apart the minimum and maximum are, the number most frequently seen, and the middle number. A hands-on activity used playing cards. In groups, students ordered groups of 5, 7, or 11 cards and described the data for the set in three different ways.





Language Arts for Grade 2

By: Stephanie Parker (Grade 2 Teacher)

In Language Arts, the Second Graders are playing with adjectives! They have learned that adjectives are words that help describe nouns. We read many detailed passages and identified the descriptive words. The students noticed that adjectives help us see a “picture” in our mind. They also pointed out that descriptive writing is more interesting to the reader. Working together as a class, the students brainstormed adjectives for a number of categories including words that describe size, shape, smell, taste and color. The students enjoyed brainstorming adjectives for beautiful photographs of their favorite animals. They surrounded their magazine photographs with adjectives they wrote on sticky labels.

The students also looked at adjectives that help us compare like small, smaller and smallest. They designed flipbooks with illustrations for their comparisons. These lessons are important to help develop the Second Graders writing and storytelling skills. They are working on adding details and descriptions to their compositions. This week during our daily journal writing time the students are pointing out that their sentences are more interesting because they are incorporating adjectives!



Language Arts for Grade 3

By: Nilla Ingravallo (Grade 3 Teacher)

With winter weather and temperatures this week, the third graders have gotten into the winter spirit through their reading and writing lessons.

How do you make square, round, and star-shaped snowflakes? The third graders learned how to make these types of paper snowflakes by reading the how-to book, *Let's Make Snowflakes!* They reviewed the importance of reading directions carefully in order to produce an accurate final product. The students learned the qualities and features of the how-to genre. They discussed the importance of transition words and phrases as well as imperative sentences when reading and writing these types of nonfiction texts. This text along with other craft directions, recipes, and instructions will be read and examined for this how-to unit. After reading several of these pieces, the third graders will apply their newly learned knowledge of this writing style by selecting topics for their own how-to books. Next week, the students will create their own informative how-to pieces with a materials section and clear and detailed directions on how to create their projects. The third graders will use Microsoft Publisher to publish their books, which will include nonfiction text features that they learned about during a previous reading unit.



This week, the third graders produced winter themed written pieces. During this writing unit, the students learned how to write a four paragraph essay with an introduction, two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. They were taught the aspects of each of these essay components and compared it to paragraph writing. With teacher modeling and guided practice, the students were able to compose their first four paragraph essay, which is a skill that will continue to be reinforced and developed. The third graders wrote about why they like winter.

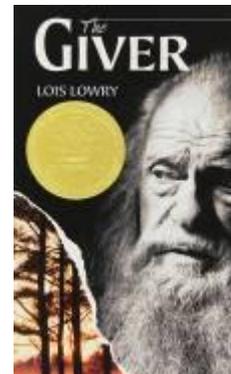


English for Grade 4

By: Philip D'Anna (Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher)

Not every student is a “test-taker”. Each student has knowledge they wish to communicate, but tests are not always the best way for them to do this. While some students excel at traditional exams, others demonstrate learning in other ways. This was the aim of the *Tic-Tac-Toe* assignment over the winter break. This project was geared towards allowing students to demonstrate their learning without the daunting task of assessment. Knowing their own strengths, each student chose assignments that they felt would accurately demonstrate their experiences with the novel. Illustrations, journal entries, and newsletters were just a few of the ways that the class was able to explain Room One.

In the upcoming weeks we will continue to develop our paragraph writing skills before diving into our next novel, Frindle. Building an understanding of grammar and mechanics is an integral part of writing. It is how we open lines of effective communication. Writing is another means for students – aside from speaking and illustrating – to express themselves. When a student begins to understand *how* to convey meaning, their writing will become compelling and their efforts tireless.



English for Grade 6

By: Philip D'Anna (Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher)

In the near future you may begin to notice that your child is looking at the world through a different set of eyes. He or she may start to question why certain rules and parameters are in place. This may be caused by our upcoming study of utopian societies and their innate need to be perfect.

Next week, we will begin reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. This fiction story features a boy, Jonas, who finds himself settled in a perfectly organized society. Only, he realizes that there is much more to life than what his communities offers its people. Upon our completion of *The Giver* we do a comparative study of this topic by watching a movie called *The Truman Show*, which tells a very similar story. It is an exciting and thought-provoking unit that elicits curiosity, intrigue, and inquiry.

January also brings the end of the second marking period. As we move closer to the halfway point of the year, it is important that the students continue to be diligent and responsible. The end of the second quarter means that they are that much closer to joining the Upper Division, and growing complacent now will only hinder their ability to maximize their potential as learners.

The class website and individual planners are means to remain aware of assignments, due dates, and exam dates. The writing rubric and daily instruction are ways to guide and grow writing. Thorough and attentive completion of work will continue to improve the students' desire to achieve higher goals and build self-worth as learners and individuals.





Science for Grade 8

By: John Hale (Science Teacher)

The Garden School 8th Grade Teachers are coordinating their instruction in order to create integrated school-wide projects during the month of March or April. The area of learning will use the book *October Sky* by Homer Hickam as the focus. This is a non-fiction story about a group of boys from a coal-mining town in West Virginia. After the launch of Sputnik, the boys start to study rocketry. The book takes you through their hard work to design, build, and launch their rockets. Their hard work pays off when they win the National Science Fair.



To help our the 8th graders learn more about these self-motivated students from West Virginia, we are asking each teacher to design a lesson, unit or activity that will highlight what these boys accomplished or explores the Appalachian culture. In English, they will be reading and analyzing the book. In History, they will be study the Appalachian culture. In Science, they will investigate rockets then build and launch the rockets.

All this will culminate in the 8th graders teaching three topics to the PreK through 3rd grades. The topics to be taught are the development of a Space Elevator, Life in Space, and NASA's Orion Space Capsule. The 8th graders will design their own lessons and present them to those grades in March or April. They will also help the younger students build their own rockets and get a chance to launch them in the field. It should be a day of fun and excitement for all.

History for Grade 9

By: Marcia Elkind (History and English Teacher)

Parents often ask why we take a week off from teaching to test. A fair question. It does interrupt the flow of lessons and gets children out of the habit of homework and notetaking. However, the benefit outweighs the negatives. This is a time to pause and reflect on what they have learned so far this year. I ask my students to know "the forest from the trees." They need to identify the major themes we have developed: "trade things, trade ideas," and "3c's plus 1 = Civilization." Do they know what the "seven layer cake" represents or why the destruction of Minoan culture remains a "mystery in history"? Along with seeing the forest, they must be able to identify the trees in the forest. What were early human-like beings called? What was humanity's first invention? Who united Upper and Lower Egypt and created a single nation? Ideas and opinions without facts carry little weight.

I have given my students a "study guide." It answers the question, "What is on the test?" I say, "Everything!" Test taking is not about learning things for an exam. It is about learning to organize your thinking, work quickly under time constraints, strategize the best way to approach the test. The learning is done throughout the semester. This test is a good check to see if that is happening. We can adjust if we know now where the problems are. Are the kids not doing their reading at home? Are they taking good notes in class? Are they encouraged to ask questions when they are confused? Call it a mid-course correction.

This week we are finishing up our studies of ancient Greece. There is a great deal of material for the ninth graders to read and understand from their texts. My class notes and explanations help, but ultimately their education is for them to



go out and get. I can assign the reading; I can't make them do it. They must develop a good work ethic over the course of the semester and look at the midterm and the final as opportunities to show how much they have learned over a period of months.

Parents, make sure they sleep the night before the exam. They should have a good breakfast. They should have pens and whatever materials their teachers have indicated, not go running madly through the halls looking for a black pen or a calculator. Get to the testing room early. Take some deep breaths. They can do this!

Next semester, onward to Rome!

History for Grade 10

By: Richard Grusky (History Department Chair)

The Sophomores at Garden School are engaged in an Advanced Placement course in European History. Curriculum up to the French Revolution has been completed. Following the mid-term examinations the group will commence with the Industrial Revolution and continue on to the current century.

Foreign Language for Grades 11 and 12

By: Agustin Melara (Foreign Language Department Chair)

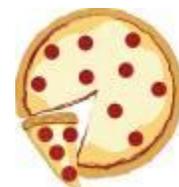
The Juniors in French IV have just begun reading their second novel of the school year. *Jean de Florette* is the compelling story of Jean, a city dweller, who has inherited a farm from his uncle in a small village in Provence, France. When Jean and his family move into the farm, they struggle to survive in a society where outsiders are not easily accepted because of pre-established misconceptions about them. Although Marcel Pagnol published this novel half a century ago, the students in the class were quick to grasp and interpret the author's sociopolitical message: the rejection of foreigners by many societies throughout the world--a message that continues to resonate in the 21st century.

The Seniors in Spanish and French classes have been studying the Preterit tense, which is used to express completed actions in the past. In addition, they have been studying the Imperfect tense, a descriptive tense mainly used to convey repeated actions in the past. The Imperfect tense is an important grammatical structure because it enables students to make references about their childhood, express habitual actions in the past, or state what they were doing when something else occurred. On Monday, students in the Spanish class will take a quiz on the irregular forms of preterit. Both classes will start reviewing for Midterms in the upcoming days.

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



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!!

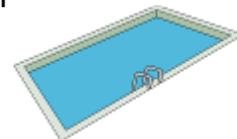
This year's competition will have a first place AND second place winner for the lower and upper school with a tie breaker for those close calls...

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 or email us at gala@gardenschool.org

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

Don't worry! We will honor your support of Garden School

with the same deal!

GARDEN SCHOOL YEARBOOK January 26th deadline!!!



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/