

Garden School News

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Headmaster's Jackson Heights Poetry Festival Column

More and more throughout the independent school community discussions are being held about the issues of relationships, respect, kindness and the general manner in which students, teachers and parents treat each other on a daily basis.

From the arena of public discourse and popular media, we are constantly being exposed to the lowest level of political, personal and social discourse. Our politics has degenerated into innuendo, slander, suggestion, labeling—all lacking a profound articulation of ideas and issues.

In this climate of disrespect, we need to open up discussions on an almost daily basis with our students, teachers and parents about the positive reality of respect, kindness and genuine discourse. Schools like ours have the ability to conduct these discussions in both obvious and subtle ways, from the encouragement of kindness among children to a more significant and caring attitude toward our local and global environment.

Some of these discussions can be inserted into academic discourse and others may be more overtly addressed through group meetings. Our goal for ourselves, just as it should be for our society, should be to establish kindness, respect and *gravitas* as the normal range of behaviors rather than the exception. If we all conduct the daily intercourse of life as if it were the equivalent of the global, then our personal, educational and professional environments will be enhanced.

Jackson Heights Poetry Festival

This past week Garden School drew the NYC community into its backyard, literally. The first annual Jackson Heights Poetry Festival was launched from May 15-17 and the three events were held at Garden School.

Thursday brought lively workshop classes taught by professors and poets (including our headmaster, Richard Marotta), followed by cocktails and a panel

discussion that involved everyone in talk and debate in the library. On Friday, May 16th, an open mic and "poetry slam" let the voices of our city ring at Novo Restaurant and Lounge on 37th Ave. Some of the deepest and most beautiful poems were read by the poets in Ms. Macy's second grade class, introducing what continued to be a night of inspiring words.

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Dates to Remember

Mon., May 26th Memorial Day—School Closed	Fri., May 30th Grade 4 - Caumsett Trip and Sleepover
Tues., May 27th Sr. Class Dinner	Sat., May 31st Open House for School and Camp
Wed., May 28th Jean Day/Bake Sale for China Earthquake Victims	Mon., June 2nd Upper Division Exams
Wed., May 28th Music Recital—4pm	Tues., June 3rd Lower Division Talent Show
Thurs., May 29th Upper Division Yearbook Dance	Fri., June 6th Moving Up Ceremonies Last Day of School Noon Dismissal

Upper Division

May 28th was the culmination of a multi-grade emphasis on Mars to commemorate the Phoenix landing. Designed and directed by Mr. Hale, the project explored ideas about space exploration through the sciences, history and literature. Mr. Hale's 8th grade physical science class took the lead in educating the younger members of the Garden community, (Grades Pre-K through 3) through Power Point presentations, follow-up questions and interactive projects. Teaching sessions were followed by one-on-one teams of 8th graders and younger students constructing paper rockets. As the photos on page 2 show, both older and younger participants were totally engrossed in the learning process and came away with a better understanding of the purpose of the mission to Mars.

Lower Division Highlights

On Thursday evening, May 1, the Sixth Grade performed "The Mikado" by Gilbert and Sullivan. The auditorium was packed while students spoke their lines, sang songs and danced to perfection.

The students picked out fabric and sewed their own kimonos in art class. They also created props and painted background scenes. Mount Fuji never looked better!

The leads sang solos and duets while the chorus sang in Japanese to a syncopated stomp. The audience laughed at the plot and antics on stage while the students backstage were silly with nervous anticipation of their parts in the show.

Everyone had a great time performing and watching the show. It was a huge success thanks to Ms. Butler, Mrs. Prio, the talented sixth graders and all of their teachers.

For those who wish to 'relive' their child's stage debut, videos of the performance will be available for sale next week. Please contact Jessica Flanagan, our After School Coordinator for details.



Jackson Heights Poetry Festival Continued ...

Saturday, May 17th brought sunshine and the main festival event. Student winners of the JHPF poetry contest were given awards and a chance to read their work under the big tent at the festival alongside published poets including Patrick Rosal, Ishle Yi Park, Bill Zavatsky, and Michael Dumanis. Student winners include Garden's very own ESL Skills student, Angela Pan. The band El Jezel, with lead singer Jessica Flanagan, Garden School's After School Coordinator, and musician Bianco also performed. Visitors got to enjoy Sammy's Halal food, a Starbucks booth, and Mrs. Yu's table that devoted itself to raising funds for the earthquake in China relief.

The Jackson Heights Poetry Festival, co-founded and directed by Sarah Macy Heinemann (second grade teacher) and Marina Yoffe (alumna of Garden), is now working to grow roots in the NYC community and to make next year's festival more spectacular. Garden School will remain the home to The JHPF as it is a great environment which inspired students who helped make this year's festival happen. "We were very fortunate to have diligent Garden upper division students working as our interns for this event," Sarah Macy Heinemann says, "and are excited to see what next year brings."

For information on this event, please visit www.jhpfest.org

Mars Landing



Meet the Author A "Foundations" Course

Students from the early childhood program were able to "meet" some of their favorite authors including Eric Carle, Dr. Seuss and William Steig. The foundations class met once a week for twelve weeks with Mrs. Stiga and Miss. Sarran.

The class discussed the job of an author and illustrator. Students were shown pictures and were given background information on the authors of some of their favorite books. They were exposed to new titles by these authors as well. In the twelve weeks we met five authors and read a selection of their work.

Every week started with a real aloud. The students were often involved in the reading. When we read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* students had the caterpillar puppet eat through all the food. When we read *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* students performed a puppet show. The students then answered questions about the story, retold the story or their favorite part and compared the story to other books by the same author.

Reading was followed by a related craft or cooking activity. The students loved making cookies after reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* and making pancakes after reading *Pancakes, Pancakes!*

The students enjoyed "meeting" the authors and are continuing on their own by checking out their books from the library! Please encourage your child to read books by some of these authors, or find "new friends" in our school library. You can also help to instill a love of reading by reading to your child, or having your child see you reading each day.



- F**
 - Please be sure to return your Enrollment Agreement for the 2008/9 school year.... Your child's schedule cannot be set without it.
 - Remember to sign-up for our lower division "Pre-Season" program—June 9th through 27th
- Y**
 - SUMMER CAMP BEGINS!!!! June 30th through August 22nd. Enroll in either our NURSERY, JUNIOR, FAST or TEEN TRAVEL Program.
 - Beginning Summer '08, our School Bus Fleet will begin operation. Call Ms. Maisano for details.
 - Final grades will be issued to students of families who have met their financial obligations. If in arrears, please contact Ms. Maisano.