



# Garden School Newsletter



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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**"Cultivating Success in Every Child"**

Friday, October 18, 2019

## Thoughts for the Week

By: [Richard Marotta, Ph.D.](#),  
Headmaster



Last night we held our international night festival as a kick off to United Nations week and as a celebration of the beauty of the diversity of cultures in our world. Our gymnasium was transformed into a microcosm of our world through decorations, activities and the incredible diversity of foods from all over the globe.

This annual event speaks very strongly to our commitment to diversity and our understanding of the importance of developing and sustaining a global consciousness. As I walked through the gym to experience the delicious variety of foods being offered, it struck me that each of the special dishes there was one of our families who had prepared this as a representation of their cultural origins. These trays of food were not an abstraction; they were

linked to the family and the culture they represented.

At our school, the omnipresence of global culture touches us deeply. The reality of our international culture reveals itself each day through discussion with others, through hearing languages from all over the world and from our commitment to cultivating a global consciousness within our students and our faculty. International awareness touches upon the heart of our identity.

We welcome students from all over the world into our environment, and not only teach them but learn from them about their cultural origins. For me this is particularly powerful, since on a daily basis, I can experience the elegance of diversity. In a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to diversity, to differences and more committed to a narrow and hate-filled version of nationalism, for us to be able to recognize that the world

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transcends the narrowness of nationalism and is filled with the beauty of all expressions of human consciousness affirms that our teachers, students and families together present a model of what human culture is and should be.

In philosophy, theology and psychology, the issue of 'the other' or 'otherness' frequently helps explain how we react to people and situations that do not necessarily emerge from our own experience. Yet this is the true beauty of human life: to embrace the simultaneous reality of our individual and collective identity.



Wilson and Mr. Roselli deliver dumplings to the Asia table.

This should not be something to be feared, but something to be enjoyed. We can be both individual and global simultaneously. As a culture, a society, a school and as individuals, the 'other' enriches our lives.

Aside from the wonderful time families, teachers and students had last night, international night teaches us that we live in richly detailed world that provides us with experiences that are diverse, individual and beautiful. Thank you to all those members of our community who made international night a success and, more importantly, for reminding us and affirming our commitment to the diversity of the human experience.



# Garden School International Night 2019



REMEMBER  
FOREVER

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*Justine*

## Dates to Remember



- **Saturday, October 19th - PSATs for Tenth Graders** (Be at school at 8:45 AM)
- **United Nations Week (October 21st - 25th)**
- **Monday, October 21st - Pre-K Visits the Firehouse**
- **Thursday, October 24th - Photo Retake Day**
- **Friday, October 25th - Halloween Parties in Classrooms**
- **October 31st - Jackson Heights Halloween Parade** on 37th Avenue

*It's not too early to purchase [an advanced copy](#) of the Garden School Yearbook. Get it!*

## Halloween Scares Meets Tenth Grade Chemistry by [Marlene Dapice](#) (Chemistry Teacher)

Have you ever gone to a Halloween haunted house? If so, perhaps you remember putting your hand into an opening in a cloaked box of some type and being hesitant to find out what was inside. You recoiled with an exclamation of “eew” when you touched the cold, slimy worm-like mass, or screamed when you thought something crawled or touched your hand. Not knowing what was inside was intriguing. In chemistry, students are exploring the scientific events which led up to our current understanding of the atom. To gain a better appreciation of what early scientists went through to discern the structure of the atom and the arrangement of its common subatomic particles, students engaged in a “black box” experiment. In one class, each student was given a series of sealed containers. Each container had one or more partitions (or perhaps none) and a single ball bearing. By manipulating the container and using their sense of hearing, students attempted to discern, then diagram, the arrangement of partitions within the container. In another class, a plywood board with an affixed geometric shape on one side was used. Students shot a marble under the board from different angles, listening each time to where the marble made contact with the shape. They tracked the pattern on paper attached to the top side of the board. Connecting the dots at the end hopefully would yield the identity of the hidden shape. Students learned that you don’t always have to see something in order to have the ability to gather information about it.

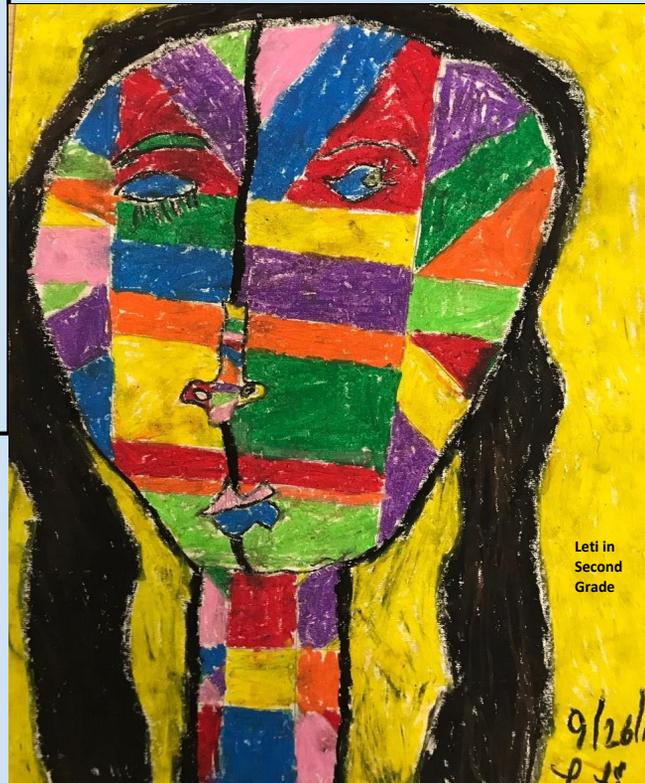


*Students in Mrs. Dapice's Chemistry class are exploring the science behind the atom using discovery and experimentation.*

## First and Second Graders Work on Pablo Picasso-inspired Self-Portraits by [Chris Zelles](#) (Art Teacher)

First and Second graders are working on a Pablo Picasso inspired self-portrait. For this project students learned of Picasso's biography and the affects his art work have had on the world. Students were then given iPads where they researched various Picasso portraits, borrowing different elements to implement into their own portrait. The medium being used for this project is oil pastels and students really seem to be having a blast making big, bold color patterns. Here are some of the high light from the 2nd grade so far.

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Leti in  
Second  
Grade

# A Critical Stance Under the Lens of Critical Theory

by [Richard Marotta](#) - AP English Teacher and Chair

AP English has gotten off to a very good start this semester. To date we have read two Greek plays by Euripides, *Medea* and *Hecuba*, one play by Shakespeare, *Othello*, and we begun reading Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. In addition we have written two essays, one on Euripides and one on Shakespeare.

We began the course by establishing some critical context within which students would be able to locate a text and an approach to the text. We examined various critical approaches, such as Freudian, Marxist, Deconstruction, historical criticism, Reader-Response and feminist models. Our goal is to understand that a text can be approached from any number of critical stances and that the interpretation of the text will depend on the approach. Since this is what students frequently experience in a college English class, our goal was to prepare them for this process.

Going forward we will read such works as Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Orwell's *1984*, Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and several others. We take a seminar approach to our class, which means that students need to be active participants in the process of exploring a text.

## Pre-K Kids: **FIRE!** by [Eileen Reyes](#) (Early Childhood Lead Teacher)

Fire-fighting equipment is also being explored as the children notice signs of the very important tools used within our school, such as: fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire safety lights, etc. Connections have been made as to the kinds of fire equipment used in their homes, such as similar kinds of smoke detectors and fire escapes. What better way to reinforce fire safety lessons but with a trip to our local fire station? The Pre-K and K classes will be taking a walking trip, along with some parents, Monday morning to use their senses as they are taught by our firefighting heroes themselves. These important community helpers will teach all the fire safety rules by giving the children a firsthand experience of sitting in a fire truck, touching special equipment and tools, trying on their protective clothing, etc. at the fire station! *Fire! Fire!* by Gail Gibbons, *Fire Fighters & Fire Engines* by Lisa Peters, and *The Fire Station* by Robert Munsch are just a few books we have used to make connections to our real life experiences and knowledge on fire safety. We are so excited to wear our fire safety hats to the firehouse and learn more from our community firefighters.



**Fire Safety is important for everyone. Also - who remembers play fireman as a kid?**

## **Dive Deep: An Introduction to the Scientific Process by [Blair Wright](#) (9th Grade Science Teacher)**

This quarter is off to an exciting start for our garden school ninth graders! We've just finished a successful couple of chapters including introductions to science and the scientific process, neurobiology and chemistry in biological systems.

As we finish up, we're moving onto an ecology and the study of limited resources and how it impacts our environment. We'll be learning about nitrogen and carbon fixation in addition to this as a great addendum to garden schools go green initiative. Stay tuned for more updates!



## **United Nations Week Events at Garden School**

- October 21, 2019: Video about the UN
- October 22, 2019: Show off your ethnic heritage with your favorite attire
- October 23, 2019: International Jersey Day
- October 24, 2019: United Nations Day: wear UN blue to show your support

## **Eighth Graders Start a New Unit on Linear Equations by [Lauren Little](#)**

In Algebra honors, we just started a new unit on linear equations. We started off by identifying solutions to linear equations and plotting points on the rectangular coordinate plane. The students enjoyed a game of battleship, where the ships were placed on the rectangular coordinate plane. Next, the students will learn about graphing linear equations and the different forms of linear equations.





International Night 2019



Thank you for everyone who helped make our International Night festivities such a success. More than forty-three families contributed hot food or beverages for the event. We shared dumplings, samsas, empanadas, hummus, cod fritters, chili, and other delicacies from all regions of the world. Thanks to the International Committee: Mr. Melara, Mr. Gomis, Ms. Ahfeld, Mr. Roselli, Ms. Blakeley, and Mr. Heineman for spearheading this

## TV Drama class Develops Original Scripts

by [Chris Vallario](#) (English Teacher)

In TV Drama, eleventh and twelfth graders are developing their worlds and their main characters for their pilot scripts. In order to compose a TV pilot, students need to have a strong understanding of the world in which they set their characters, so re-write after rewrite is part of the process. In addition, they completed character description sheets with categories like physiology (gender, age, appearance, defects, heredity, etc.) and sociology (class, occupation, religion, education, home life, political affiliations, nationality, origin, etc). They need to know their characters inside and out before they begin the writing processes.

At the start of the year, I introduced the history of TV where we honed in on classics like I Love Lucy, The Twilight Zone, and Alfred Hitchcock Presents. The rest of the course is divided into genres. The first is Detective Drama, and we screened Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (Edmund L. Hartmann, 1942), adapted from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Adventure of the Dancing Men, newly color restored, which set the tone for what mystery means. The students took away the fact that the audience always knows a secret

that the protagonist does not. Therefore, they need to provide their protagonist with a secret of their own. My students are currently focusing on answering the following questions. What is your character's goal? What is their secret? What is their want? Need? And what obstacles get in the way of their goals? Students learn each day just how important it is to discuss their ideas and share them with one another in order to get to a new place or achieve a breakthrough. For example, Selin U. had the idea of writing about a female surgeon in NYC, and I asked, "what sets this character apart from other surgeons?" Clarissa M. suggested, "what about making her a vampire?" Selin's eyes lit up and that is her new premise.

Within detective drama, we have morphed the old into the new by screening and reading pilot scripts like Columbo, Dexter, Law and Order, and Alias. For instance, we screened Elementary created by Robert Doherty where Lucy Liu plays Dr. Watson a feminist take on Sherlock Holmes. The students will continue to engage with materials and soon they will be drafting their very own pilot scripts.

## "What's in a word?" by [Sonia Ambarsom](#), 8th Grade Math Teacher

We have been focusing on word problems for the past two weeks this involves understanding and focusing on keywords in a written math problem and extracting the operations needed to solve the problem. For example when the exercise is posed as "Five times a number subtracted from 90 is equal to 40". Translating the keywords and using them to the appropriate mathematical operation. For example, in the word "times", the students know that relates to multiplication and to realize the specific manner in which the words reflect the placement of numbers and algebraic expressions. As in "subtracted from 90", they have learned that subtracted, of course, represents a difference. The difficulty was in the particular words such as "from 90", "less than 6x". In conclusion, the students have made tremendous progress with their ability to work with word problems, especially since, generally speaking, word problems tend to be the most difficult aspect of Algebra.

## An Eerie Soundtrack in Music Class for Uur Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Graders

by [Tom Heineman](#), Fine Arts Department Chair

As Halloween draws near, students will reflect upon music that is related to the day, such as Camille Saint-Saens' orchestral tone poem *Danse Macabre*, or associated with the time of year due to darker elements, like Edvard Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from his *Peer Gynt Suite*. Both pieces are programmatic; the music is meant to aurally depict visual images (in the case of the Grieg piece, it was accompanying a play).

*Danse Macabre* music represents the release of skeletons, ghosts, witches, and bats on Halloween night. Every one of these creatures has their own musical theme, so 4th and 5th grade students will contemplate what type of music and which instruments would be used, and whether the notes would be long or short for each before they hear a note of music.

They will then take educated guesses as to which theme they are hearing while listening to the piece by holding up placards with images depicting each of the above creatures. We will discuss the instrumentation (which changes throughout the piece) and speculate about other aspects of the music: what time it is when the creatures are freed (there's a sound meant to represent clock chimes), what quiet, short notes with separation between them are portraying (footsteps), and the significance of the oboe's rooster call (dawn approaching). Students will conclude the activity by following a teacher-designed map depicting the themes and events that are heard in the music.

As an extension of their study of form in music, 6th graders will examine some fugues and a few pieces commonly associated with Halloween. This will be their first foray into exploring structure in European Classical music. Students will use their developing drumming skills to imitate the ostinato rhythm heard throughout the piece of music. They will then notate the rhythm on the chalkboard. The piece, which stems from a play, depicts a chase; the music gradually increases in tempo and dynamics until it reaches its conclusion. Students can take educated guesses, based upon aspects of the music, as to what the music is attempting to portray at a given point in time. They will also track the rhythm through its instrumental permutations on a musical map and attempt to complete a teacher-created maze that employs the ostinato heard in the piece.

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