

# Garden School News

December 7, 2007

Volume 7 Issue 4

## Headmaster's Column

No profession in our society has been discussed in as much detail by those who are both practitioners and observers than has teaching. We analyze it, prescribe it, value it, undervalue it, codify it and liberate it. Why? Why is it so important to us? Perhaps because while its results are difficult to capture in the short-term, no other activity has the long-term impact on individuals and society as does teaching.

In my view, teaching from the nursery to the university involves the intense interaction between teacher, student and subject. There is a three-way connection occurring in the classroom that choreographs the movement of two minds over the subject-object. Teachers are 'teaching' students about a subject; yet the result is learning not instruction. How the teacher energizes and engages the student's mind with the subject is the all-important point. Teachers who love their subject with passion, who believe that understanding the Shakespearean play, the mathematical formula, the reading process, the scientific process etc, will be a life-changing experience are the ones who guide (educate) their students in the most permanent ways.

The goal of the teacher is to become irrelevant; the goal for the student is to learn how to learn. To ignite a passion for learning within the student will propel that student to learn over a life time. Teaching transcends the space of the classroom to dwell within the learner's lifetime.

## The College Process

December means one thing to Garden seniors "college applications." Several members of the Class of 2008 submitted applications under "early decision" and "early action" plans which will allow them to know if they have been admitted before the winter break. All of the students will send applications during the vacation and will expect responses between February and April.

While the seniors are actually applying to college, they are not the only students with college on their minds. The juniors and sophomores received their PSAT scores last week and are in the process of reviewing their results with their teachers in math and English classes. In addition,

the juniors had their first College Night last month and will attend another, with a panel of college admissions counselors, in February. The College Fair at UNIS, which Garden hosts with 4 other schools, will be held on April 28, 2008.

All students in the upper division, especially those in grades 9-12, understand that the work they are doing will impact their college choices. Students are encouraged to do their best work in the second quarter and to build their extracurricular experience by getting involved in activities in and out of school. Information about the college counseling program at Garden School will appear on the updated Garden website when it launches this month.

## Dates to Remember

*Dec. 13th*

*Adopt an Animal Bake-Sale*

*&*

*Jean Day  
for Heifer International*

*Dec. 17th*

*Yearbook Candy Cane Sale*

*Dec. 19th*

*Pre-K Trip to Nutcracker  
at  
Lincoln Center*

*Dec. 21st—10:00 am*

*Lower Division Winter Show  
And Fashion Show*

*Dec. 21st*

*Upper Division Movie Trip*

*Dec. 21st*

*Noon Dismissal for All*

*Classes Resume*

*January 7, 2008*

## Upper Division

Friday, December 7th

Student Council members coordinated this year's pep rally to kick off the 2007-08 basketball season in both the boys and girls *Independent Schools Athletic Leagues*. Our four teams were introduced to the student body during festivities in our gymnasium.

Team members challenged the spectators to shoot baskets and run drills to rousing cheers. All students showed their support by wearing school colors of blue and white and some even took it the extreme by painting their faces and dying their hair. We are all anticipating a winning season in the *ISAL* and *GISAL* .... Updates to follow.

## Lower Division Highlights

One of life's great joys is reading a good book. For our early learners, reading means recognizing the sounds of consonants, putting them together with vowels, and then blending the sounds to form words.

If you visit the Nursery class, students begin claiming letters as their own, especially the letter that begins their name. PreK students are busy with the sound of letters and brainstorming words beginning with that letter. Kindergarten students are using phonetically controlled readers to sound out words and read short books.

At this point in the year, first graders have just concluded a study of folk tales, with their reading of an African tale, *Lazy Lion*. Reading comes alive as they weave projects with the reading. In this case, sequence charts and puppets were used to retell the story. Second graders are reading about immigrant families and will make an Ellis Island brochure. Winter themes are explored through the poems of Robert Louis Stevenson. Next, these enthusiastic readers will begin reading fiction and nonfiction works on African animals. Third graders are completing an author study on Patricia Polacco. They wrote letters to her and eagerly await responses.

Fourth, fifth and sixth graders read content area texts each day. Additionally, social studies and language arts study employ the use of literature selections. Fourth graders are reading Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl and studying character development. Fifth graders are enjoying Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, while sixth graders are solving the *Murder on the Orient Express*.