

Friends Community School



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD...

Spring-like weather is forecast for our region this holiday weekend. Only eight weeks ago, snow was accumulating at a record pace, and schools were closed for an entire week. Since that time, our state association (AIMS) has communicated frequently with State officials and member schools. During our spring break we received some good news from Nancy Grasmick, the State Superintendent of Schools. She granted the nonpublic schools a waiver of up to five days due to the severe winter weather conditions. In planning for this year, we built three snow days into school calendar. The Superintendent's decision will mean that the calendar for the remainder of the school year (graduation, final day of school, and remaining holidays) will remain as originally planned.

In addition, I requested that the Department of Education consider our response to winter weather. As we made up one snow day on Presidents Day, and initiated two days of cyber school, FCS was able to maintain a reasonable level of instruction and school-related work during the snow emergency. Our children will, in fact, have participated actively in the required number of school days if the cyber school plan is approved. We appreciate the Superintendent's decision for nonpublic schools and look forward to her interpretation of our creative response to the challenges of an extraordinary winter. Enjoy the sunshine!

In Peace,

Larry

Upcoming Events This Week

April 5 - New Instrumental Classes Begin

April 6 - (3/4), Library of Congress

April 7 - (8th), National Building Museum

Philanthropy Matters

Grandfriends Day is Friday, April 23, 2010

Grandfriends' Day is Friday, April 23, from 8:30am till 1:00pm. We are looking forward to hosting your child's grandfriend and giving them firsthand experience of things FCS. The schedule is:

8:30 - 9:30am	Arrive, short program and coffee and bagels in the multipurpose room
9:30 - 10:15am	Performance in the multi-purpose room
10:15 - 12 noon	Classroom visits and Meeting for Worship
12 noon - 1:00pm	Lunch and Greeting from Larry Clements

We are looking forward to sharing the school with Grandfriends. ***We will mail out invitations as soon as we receive your Grandfriend's name and address!***

If you already know that your Grandfriend is attending, please be sure to R.S.V.P. as soon as possible to Quillin - we need an accurate headcount so that we have lunch for everyone and so that the teachers can make the best plan for grandfriends' time in the classrooms.

If your child does not have a grandfriend coming, please let your child's teacher know. We will arrange for those with a grandfriend to widen their circle to include a child without a grandfriend, in the best of FCS' community tradition.

Quillin or PA Clerk Olivia McDaniel will be contacting people who have offered to bring salads or desserts, help with set-up or clean-up, the book sale, sweatshirts/t-shirts, or the playground paver table.

Thank you very much!



Educational Record Bureau (ERB)

Spring is in the air! That means daffodils, tadpoles, and ERB's! Just like last year, students in grades 5, 6, and 7 will be given the ERB (Educational Record Bureau) standardized test. Here is what you need to know:

When: Testing will take place during the mornings of April 19th-22nd, with no more

than 90 minutes of testing on any one day.

Why FCS tests: Most of our graduates move on to magnet programs or independent high schools, and all such programs require standardized admissions testing. Without some prior experience, our children can be at a disadvantage in such situations. FCS teaches many important skills, but taking a standardized, fill-in-the-bubble test is a skill in and of itself. We aim to give our students a safe place to develop this skill before taking tests that actually have an impact on their academic future.

How test scores will be used: The scores will be sent only to us and the parents of each individual student. Larry and the faculty look at the landmarks of our scores as compared to other similar independent schools in the area. However, they are just one of many pieces of information we use in our continual growth as an institution. Holding these tests does not at all detract from the creative, multi-sensory, progressive curriculum FCS has taken pride in for many years.

Preparation: About a week before the test, students in grades 5-7 will receive a small practice test along with instructions to take home. The practice test is also put out by the ERB company, and many students have found the questions to be very similar to those on the test itself.

Accommodations: Students who have been tested and diagnosed with various learning differences will be allotted the full accommodations as stated in their ISP. Parents of these students will receive a letter from Colleen detailing what those accommodations will be, and how FCS will meet them.

8th Grade: What will 8th-graders do on these mornings? Why, work on their 8th grade projects, of course! 8th grade students have the option to work on their project off of the FCS campus on the mornings of these days, but should report to school by 10:30am at the latest. 8th-graders who report to school at the regular time will be given a quiet, supervised room in which to work.

Please direct any further questions to either myself or Larry. Thanks!

- Melanie Cobb
5th/6th Teacher and 5th-8th Age Group Coordinator



Annual Giving Fund

If you haven't joined the group of dedicated parents who have contributed, now is the time to do so. The school benefits from your gift and your participation.

Parent participation in the Annual Giving Fund has risen to 57% to date. We need 85% parent participation to release the \$5,000 in additional funds. Please give

and be counted!

- Annual Giving Funds are tax-deductible, unlike tuition.
- A strong Annual Giving Fund helps keep our tuition cost down.

Thank you.



Spring Auction

The FCS Financial Aid Fundraising Auction is almost here!
Saturday, April 17th at Martins Crosswinds
It is now time to:

- Buy auction tickets for yourself and your friends! Have a fun night and get incredible deals on theatre and sports tickets, restaurant gift certificates, kids party packages, vacations, retail goods, gift baskets and much more... while supporting a great cause.
- Sign your kids up for Auction Pajama Movie Night. Your kids could be having fun while you are having fun, too!
- Bring in your donated items to the FCS Office. We have had an wonderful response from our FCS Community for donations. Thank you!
- See you on April 17th!



Thank You!

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for attending this years Smithsonian Family Science Night on behalf of not only the faculty, families, and staff of FCS, but also on behalf of those good people that work so hard to bring us this special event each year. Such an event would not be possible without the support of their contributors, and it is your attendance and appreciation that they need to secure funding for future events. All that is needed from you is a Thank You card. Please send a quick note to let the folks at the Smithsonian know of your appreciation for this event. You may send it by email through me, or directly to the events coordinator, Harri Vanhala (harrivanhala@ncesse.org).



After School Instrumental Program

NEW AFTER-SCHOOL INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS SCHEDULE

Just a reminder that we will begin the new spring schedule for after-school instrumental

lessons on Monday, April 5th. Students' second group lesson of the week will be replaced with a Friday ensemble rehearsal. Beginning students will rehearse from 3:15-3:45 on Friday; Advanced students will rehearse from 3:45-4:15. Students who are not immediately picked up from their rehearsal will be admitted to Extended Day and will incur the appropriate fees.



Spring Artful Afternoon in Greenbelt

When: Saturday, April 3, 2010

Where: Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road

What: Egg Hunt for ages 18 months - 6th grade begins promptly at 1pm ON THE COMMUNITY CENTER FRONT LAWN (new location). Bring a camera for photos with the bunny!

Make Manga elves, cloth fairies and more with artist Celestine Ranney-Howes (1-3pm). The Spilling Ink Project weaves memorable tales from Indian mythology through South Indian classical dance for all ages (3pm). Visit the art gallery, artists' studios, and playground (1-4pm)

Brought to you by the City of Greenbelt Department of Recreation



Green Tip of the Week

Spring Cleaning: Spring is finally here! When doing your spring cleaning, try to avoid these chemicals:

1. **Window & Air Cleaners:** Avoid Ethylene-based glycols (known as butoxyethanol, EGBE or, most commonly, "cellosolve"). Found in: blue glass cleaners, Professional Windex, UNREAL spot remover, Formula 409, Pine-Sol and Windex Aerosol. Why: EPA recently called it "a possible human carcinogen" (www.epa.gov/ncea/iris/subst/0500.htm.) Alternatives: Bon Ami & 7th Generation, Mr. Clean products. For air fresheners, use lemon & water.

2. **Citrus-oil cleaners:** (Terpenes): Mixes w/ground ozone, becomes carcinogen. Found in: lemon, pine, orange oil cleaners. Alternative: Green Terpene. www.greenterpene.com

3. **Chlorine bleach (bleach or sodium hypochlorite):** Fumes can irritate sensitive lungs (heart or respiratory problems); some studies implicate chlorine in breast cancer. Never mix w/other chemicals. Alternatives: 7th Generation Chlorine-Free Bleach or

Vinegar & water.

Have a fantastic weekend!

-- Christine Dunathan



Dates To Remember

April 13 - (3/4), St. Mary's City

April 17 - Auction

April 23 - Grandfriends Day

April 29 - (3/4), Annapolis

April 30 - Primary Team Play