

October 9, 2009

Dear Parents,

Dan is off at a conference for a couple of days, so I'm pinch hitting as the writer of this week's Headlines. (That's a baseball reference, you'll notice. You may be surprised by my use of baseball references. I'm pretty surprised myself.) Anyway, I have a lot of very interesting things to tell you, so read on...

It's been one of those great October weeks around here. We've gotten used to the routines of school by now; it's feeling more like fall than like the end of summer; and the real work of school has begun. It's an exciting time to be here, and I hope you'll feel welcome to stop by from time to time to see what's going on.

We kicked off the week on Monday morning with an all-school assembly at which Amy Schirf of the Centre County Solid Waste Authority presented Friends School with a Pennsylvania Waste Watcher Award. Our school received this recognition because of our ongoing recycling and composting programs, and our educational focus on environmental consciousness. The award was graciously accepted by our sixth grade class, the long-time stewards of our compost buckets.

The week was full of field trips, too. Our K-4 students traveled to Eisenhower Auditorium for the first of several 'Informances' scheduled by Penn State's Center for the Performing Arts this year. Harold & The Purple Crayon got rave reviews from our students and we were reminded once again of how fortunate we are to have opportunities in our community for children to see live performances by live artists. On Tuesday, our upper school students were off on their annual trip to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire at Mount

Hope, and Teacher Lisa's class visited the historic Centre Furnace Mansion on Friday morning. They do get around, don't they?

Due to less-than-ideal weather forecasts for this afternoon, we postponed Field Day once again. (We're going to try again on Monday, so remind your child to dress for outdoor play.) In its place, we held our first Reading Buddy

afternoon. This generates nearly unbearable excitement on the part of our youngest students, and although our older students are much more cool about things, they've been asking me for weeks who their reading buddies will be. (I've done some masterful matchmaking this time, if I do say so myself.)

And, in the midst of all the rich and wonderful and special things that take place during a normal week at Friends School, there's the hard work that's happening in every classroom every day, upstairs and down. Children read and write, choosing the perfect word and the proper punctuation mark; they learn the code of numbers and the rhythms of Spanish; they paint and sing, they stretch and bend; they study the natural world of playground bugs, harvest moons, and changing seasons; they come to terms with history and dream about how they'll do it differently when it's their turn. Students learn how to be friends, how to disagree civilly, and how to make amends when necessary. Can there be, I often ask myself, a more exciting place to spend one's life?

Announcements & Reminders:

****Coffee with Dan:** Tuesday, October 13 at 8:45 in the school library. This is a great opportunity to hear more about the philosophy behind mixed-age classrooms and to get a tour of the school while our classrooms are full of activity and action.

****Halloween Planning Meeting:** Halloween has traditionally been a big day at Friends School. The common areas of our building drip in not-overly-scary decorations, children bring costumes to school to get into after lunch, we have a parade through Foxdale, and most of our classrooms host Halloween parties. Our storied long-time annual visitor, Baba Yaga, has other obligations this year and cannot join us, but promises to make her way back to us next year. We expect her sidekick, Baba ZsaZsa, to visit this year.

If you'd like to be involved in any way with our October 30 Halloween celebration, please join us for a planning meeting on Thursday, October 15 at noon in the library. We'll be coordinating our decorating and clean-up team, the schedules of any costumed visitors who are planning visits, and

any new thoughts and ideas that parents might have to add. If you can't attend Thursday's meeting, but would like to be involved in any way, please call or email and let me know. (mziegler@scfriends.org or 237-8386)

****Volunteer Coffee:** If you are interested in attending a parent coffee/tea to discuss volunteer opportunities beyond Halloween, please visit the doodle link below to let us know of your interest and your schedule. There are many opportunities to get involved during the school year, so please feel free to come in and "browse" the options while meeting other parents. Please RSVP by Monday 10/12/09, by visiting this link and entering all times that you are available: <http://www.doodle.com/qe7eaus98gyythcc>. (Indicating your availability is not a commitment. It just helps in our planning.)

****Inservice Day:** Our first inservice day of the year will be on Friday, October 16 and there is no school for students that day. On Thursday, we sent you an email describing our Inservice Day Child Care Program and explaining how to register your child. Please give us a call (237-8386) or email to scfs@scfriends.org if we should plan on seeing your child there.

**** Meals on Wheels:** Many thanks to Friends School students for sharing their artistic talents this week and decorating delivery bags for Meals on Wheels. This is the first of several community service projects we have planned for the year. It's a great opportunity for our students to learn about the services that are offered, and needed, in our community, and to contribute their skills and talents to those in need.

****SCRIPS:** Be sure to check your child's Friday Folder for valuable information on saving money on tuition and earning money for the school.

- Look for information on the Scrip program and how it is even easier to participate this year.
- Be sure to register your Giant Bonus Card so your grocery purchases can work for the school.
- Don't forget that Weis and Giant grocery cards are always available for purchase at school. (You can now allocate ½ of our 5% discount to your child's tuition!)
- If you want to order Giant cards, do it directly through the school where we get a 5% discount. (Ordering through the Scrip program only gives you a 4% discount.)

Finally, I'm done. Forgive my long-windedness. Dan will be back with you next week.

Best wishes for a happy October weekend,

Mary Ziegler