



# COMMUNITY *Comment*

*Nurturing the Gifts of Mind, Body & Spirit*

May 2009

## Salute to the Class of 2009!

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Community School's sixth graders have some wonderful memories of their time here, as well as sage advice for future classes:

My favorite memory from Community School was both of the track meets. I liked them because I got to run, and I challenged myself to run the mile.

*Devan Sant*

The most interesting project I remember doing was Authors' Tea in 2nd Grade. I liked this because we got to have tea and snacks while watching projects.

*Gabrielle Maune*

The best piece of advice I would tell a younger student is to never procrastinate because the teachers can tell.

*Ryan Thornton*

Community has been the best experience of my life. I'll miss it as I go on to

my next school and beyond.

*Dwight Sutter*

My favorite book was *The Cay* because it always left you in suspense. I also liked it because it had a great plot and took many twists.

*Michael Rubenstein*

Going to Community was the best choice I have ever made and never in a million years will I even think about regretting my decision about going here.

*Amanda Cao*

The most important thing I have learned is to be independent and make choices of my own.

*Dennis Grigoryan*

Community gives children a fun learning experience. There are enriching field trips, unique projects, and excellent teachers who help each individual learn life lessons and academic skills.

*Emily Koykka*

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## Community Comment

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# Headlines:

A Message from Matthew Gould

## (Excerpted from Annual Meeting Speech)

ANNUAL MEETING  
MAY 6, 2009

In the world outside of Community School this year, we have seen unprecedented change and economic fallout. The credit crisis, resulting in the subprime mortgage crisis, has led to a near collapse of our economy. Great pillars of our financial infrastructure – AIG, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Washington Mutual, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, etc. – have crumbled. Unemployment is up and inflation is on the way.

All of us have been affected by this crisis. And whether we feel it on a day-to-day basis or not, I believe that all of us have been living with an underlying sense of anxiety this year. But despite these challenges, Community School has persevered and had an outstanding year. Financially, we have raised almost eight million dollars and are making a significant impact in improving our facilities and our endowment. We are making a positive change for this generation of Community School students, and for those in generations to come. We met our Annual Giving goal.



We are fully enrolled for next year. Twenty-nine new families will join the Community School family next year. Our retention rate (percentage of families re-enrolling for next year) stands at 94%.

But more important than all of that – no matter what goes on externally in the world outside of Community – inside the walls of Community School, children are thriving. Children are receiving a world-class education delivered in a safe, loving, and nurturing environment in which students' natural talents are noticed, appreciated, and built upon. Every single day, children at Community are challenged, they are taking risks, and they are excelling at this magnificent school.

This year we took up an intensive study on differentiation. Differentiation means delivering curriculum at different readiness levels such that we can meet individual learning needs in our classrooms – a very powerful concept. Twenty teachers and administrators joined together for a voluntary study group on this topic. We read books, watched videos, and shared differentiated lessons. What resulted was a lot of enthusiasm and, I believe, improved delivery of material in our classrooms.



### *Headlines, continued:*

This focus on differentiation could make an enormous impact on individual students and our entire School because it dovetails so perfectly with our broader mission.

One way to measure our program's effectiveness is through test scores. However, I always provide a caveat about our test scores. Good test scores are not our goal; they are not what we aspire to be as a school. However, these scores do validate that our philosophy of education – hands-on learning, creativity, group process, collaboration, and emphasis on the Arts – works. Looking at our most recent ERB scores, Community School classes outscored other independent school classes in 95% of the skill categories tested. Let me put this in perspective: of the 132 skill categories that are tested between Grades 3-6, Community School students outscored independent school averages in 125 (95%) of those skill categories!

Community School took on an international flavor this year. Helping our children develop a broad, international perspective is a vital part of their education. Throughout the year, children conducted their normal in-depth studies of countries and continents. But this year, students shared their studies with the rest of School – both at lunchtime assemblies and at our impressive March 13th International Assembly.

As always, we continue to focus on diversity as a key feature of the educational experience at Community School. The educational value of diversity cannot be understated. Negotiating and appreciating difference is a vital skill in the world of today, but will be even more so in the world of tomorrow. To help us on our journey, this year we implemented an NAIS tool – the As-

essment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM). AIM has two parts. First we formed “Discovery Committees” in which teachers, parents, staff and alumni joined together to comment on how the School is doing with regards to diversity across many areas – teaching and learning, student life, school publications, governance and leadership, etc. These discussions have led to outstanding insight as to how we can improve feelings of inclusivity in the School. The second part of AIM was an online climate survey. We are still sorting through the results, but we are planning to share our report with the School community in the fall. The report will include strengths, challenge areas, and our plans and goals for the future.

I am proud to report that in the 2009-2010 school year, Community School will have the most diverse student body in its 94-year history.

As you know, community outreach is extremely important at our school. We are so fortunate to have such a fine school and have so many resources at our disposal, but we recognize not everyone is so lucky. This year, students, faculty, and parents have been involved in a multitude of community service projects. For example: 300 placemats were donated to Bethesda Nursing Home; 325 valentines were collected for Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital; the School picnic netted over 300 canned goods for Circle of Concern; the Holiday Giving Tree produced 398 hats, gloves, scarves, diapers and wipes for SSDN; and families donated 27 bicycles to St. Louis Bicycle Works to be given to needy children in Ghana.

These are just a few examples, but my point is that character education is not simply an “add-on” at Community School. It is something integrated into the fabric of our culture and daily teaching.

One of the results of Community School's programmatic excellence is that our graduates are extremely sought after by the finest secondary schools in the region. In fact, 95% of the applications submitted by our Sixth Grade students to area independent secondary schools were acceptances.



Members of Community School's class of 2009 will be represented at six secondary schools next year, including: John Burroughs, MICDS, Whitfield, Westminster Christian Academy, Priory, and Villa Duchesne. We will miss this fabulous class of sixth graders, and wish them well in their future endeavors.

No one deserves our gratitude and appreciation more than our teachers. Our teachers are the heart and soul of our school. Our teachers are asked to serve on school-wide committees; develop, coordinate and document curriculum; and perform a multitude of duties from carpool to child study to lunchroom

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## Sixth Grade, cont.

My favorite projects at Community were skits. Not only were they fun, but we also learned a lot.  
*Alex Bush*

My favorite memory is when my JK class did the Dino Dig. I still have the fossil today in my room on my bedside table.  
*Hope Sankey*

Community is a great place with lots of opportunities. Everyone is nice and supportive, and you will always receive help when you ask for it.  
*Charlie Plax*

My favorite memory from Community School was going to Eckert's Apple Orchard in 4th Grade. Picking apples brought many friendships closer.  
*David Jones*

My favorite memory is "Heading West" because it was exciting and educational. I had a lot of fun in the practices and it was exciting to perform in front of the school.  
*Liza Johnson*



At Community School, I learned that I was a smart kid. I used to think I was bad at all subjects, but now I know that I can do well in almost all of them.  
*Connor McCarthy*

My favorite memory was giving presentations that made everyone laugh.  
*Jeremy Smith*

I have had a great experience here. I will always remember this school as the basis of my future.  
*William Loomis*

The most interesting project was Mr. Bear in First Grade. Every week a new student would learn the responsibility of taking care of other people's things.  
*Elizabeth Kalinowski*

My favorite memory is the camping trip because I had lots of fun bonding with friends.  
*Ryan Eickmeyer*

The best advice that I could give a younger student is not to procrastinate on projects, because they will have sloppier results.  
*Rosie Sciortino*

Woodshop, in my opinion, is the most interesting activity because it is very interesting to work with wood and then take the finished product home.  
*Alan Chung*

Choosing Community School for your child is opening the door to a world of opportunity that reaches far beyond academic excellence.  
*Grace Haselhorst*

My best advice to a younger student is to always be honest. For example, in Sixth Grade, the teachers love when you show integrity if you don't deserve a homework pass.  
*Christina MacAskill*



The most interesting project to me was the Sixth Grade book cover project because we got to make up a new ending for the book we read.  
*Maddie Francis*

One of my favorite memories is our Fifth Grade Stan & Clayton Rice Night because I held a big snake.  
*Elise Thomas*

Your binder is your best friend. NEVER leave your binder in the classroom because you think you won't need it!  
*Kat Nestor*

My favorite memory was building forts in Third Grade because we could play in the woods and explore.  
*Jimmy Lemkemeier*





One of the most interesting projects for me was my 4th Grade coral reef project because I got to learn more about one of my favorite subjects, the ocean. *Anna Hagan*

My favorite memories were performing in the Alphabet Kingdom and Heading West. *Amelia Reeves*

Community has given me the ability to be comfortable in front of others while speaking. *Connor Krause*

I've learned that I don't have to follow the crowd and people will still like me for who I am. *Samantha Noda*

Community is a great school because they focus on individuals. The teachers are always positive and encouraging. *Koehler Martin*

At Community School, in Sixth Grade, I have learned that I can be a responsible leader for the younger students. *Nina Muddasani*

Thanks to all the sixth graders for sharing their CS experiences! Good luck on your journey to secondary school and beyond!

Community really helped me learn my best strategies for learning. *Brody Palan*

All my teachers were awesome and funny and I will miss them next year. *Veda Kamra*



*Headlines, cont.*

management. They are asked to write comprehensive student reports, be in regular communication with parents, and serve as ambassadors for the School during admission season.

But what our teachers do best – and this is where the magic comes in – is teach individual students. What they do so well is know each child individually such that they can honor each child's natural gifts, honor their talents, support their struggles, and find joy in their accomplishments. And this constant striving to know each child is the hallmark of a Community School education and the hallmark of excellence.

My final thoughts bring me back to the

financial crisis that we have dealt with all year long. This crisis has produced a storm that has impacted us all. But when a storm like this occurs, we have choices. We could try to out run it. We could batten down the hatches, take cover, and simply wait it out. Or we could stare it down, look it right in the eye, and even move toward it. This final choice is what I suggest. This current storm actually has the potential to make us stronger because when you are in a storm like this, you are forced to set priorities: What are our core values? What is important? What is central and what is essential to support our mission of educating our kids?

I believe that smart, yet bold, forward movement and perseverance will lead



us to a stronger place. And, by working together, we'll come out stronger. Thank you all for a great year!

*Matthew*



## Focus on Faculty

🦋 Congratulations to this year's Lowenhaupt Award Winner, **Lynn Christopher**. Lynn teaches Fourth Grade North. Among other accomplishments, Lynn helped implement the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) here at Community School, and works tirelessly on the Character Education



Committee. The Lowenhaupt Award recognizes faculty members who have furthered the education of children through excellence in program development, presenting information at conferences or workshops, or publishing works for other professionals. The award was established by the Lowenhaupt family in honor of Henry C. Lowenhaupt, a

former parent and grandparent. The award is conferred by a committee consisting of the Head of School, Division Directors, and the past four Lowenhaupt Award winners.

🦋 At Community's recent Annual Meeting, several teachers and staff were recognized for their years of service. Five-year honorees included 4N Teacher **Lynn Christopher**, Maintenance Worker **Edgar Davis**, Purchasing Agent **Becky Harman**, 6th Grade Teacher **Molly Kerckhoff**, 2nd Grade Teacher **Jessica Klingbeil**, Nursery Teacher **Sonie Rao**, 5th Grade Teacher **Lynn Smith**, and Head of School **Matthew Gould**. Ten-year honorees were Librarian **Debbie Krieg**, SKE Teacher **Gale Reed**, and 6th Grade Teacher **Pam Rothschild**. The 15-year recipient was Upper Elementary French Teacher **Lori Marusic**. PE Teacher **Christine Bugnitz** has 20 years of service. And finally, with an *amazing 30 years* under their belts, Nursery Teacher **Sharon Barnholtz** and PE Teacher **Jim Hoots**!

🦋 Head of School **Matthew Gould**



was recently elected Vice President of ISSL (Independent Schools of St. Louis) for the coming year.

🦋 Congratulations to 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher **Jered Gruszka** and his wife Angela on the birth of Luca James Gruszka on March 31!

🦋 Congratulations also to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher **Shannon Galfi** and her husband Rob on the birth of Sean Martin Galfi - born April 22.

🦋 And finally, congratulations to JKE Teacher **Katie Norris** and her husband David on the birth of Madison Grace Norris - born May 11 - just in time to make it into this issue!



*Photo: Some of the Annual Meeting award recipients include (from left): Gale Reed, Sonie Rao, Jessica Klingbeil, Debbi Krieg, Lori Marusic, Sharon Barnholtz, Matthew Gould, Pam Rothschild, Molly Kerckhoff, Jim Hoots, Chris Bugnitz, Lynn Christopher, Lynn Smith*



## ECOMMUNITY

Thoughts naturally turn “green” in the spring, as the trees leaf out and the flowers bloom. Community School, too, has recently turned its thoughts toward “green” activities. Here are some of the eco-friendly goings-on of late at the School.

Each April, Earth Day provides a catalyst for green and environmentally friendly activities. This year, each class



participated in an activity to honor Earth Day. Sixth graders collected aluminium cans, and stomped them before taking them to a recycling center. The money they raised will be donated to Forest Park Forever. Fifth graders collected used alkaline batteries and took them to a recycling center. Fourth Grade made recycled paper and used it for a project. Third graders initiated an ongoing project which will help Chef Mike create his yummy lunches - they planted an herb garden with basil, oregano, thyme, parsley, and rosemary. Second Grade planted squash, made



reusable bags, and read an Earth Day book with Nursery. First graders picked up trash on the trail, and made garden bricks. SKers planted a tree and a garden. Finally, JKers made recycle bins and collected trash on the playground.

Community has an ongoing recycling program, run by sixth graders. We currently recycle paper, junk mail, cardboard, aluminum & tin cans, glass and plastics #1-5. Each classroom and office has at least one recycling bin, regularly emptied by sixth grade volunteers.

Community is also trying to look toward the future. Next year, for the first time, there will be a “Sustainability Committee,” staffed by faculty and an administrator. This committee will look at ways that Community can become “greener” and work towards a more sustainable school environment.

Our ongoing construction project also has “green” aspects. One example is the new water detention basin and filtration system will collect rain-water from the campus, which will then be filtered and cleaned as it is released into the local watershed. The design for this rain garden dovetails beautifully with the School’s ongoing efforts to teach our students about sustainability and being good stewards of the Earth’s resources.



One of the Founding Principles of Community School states: “*The School should make a child aware of the world about him and his environment, his place in that environment and in world affairs, to assume responsibility and to carry it through to a successful end.*” One of our goals is to teach our students about sustainability and being good stewards of the Earth’s resources.

And sometimes, of course, they teach us. Sixth grade teachers say that their students recycle *everything* - even re-



search papers they worked on for weeks. One staff member commented recently, “My children are always running into the bathroom when I’m brushing my teeth to turn the water off.”

Together, we are all working towards a more environmentally friendly, sustainable future for ourselves and our children.

*Photos (clockwise from top): Students created and stretched out a chain of plastic bags, which were then recycled. Sixth Grade students stomping cans. Third Grade students planting herbs for the kitchen. First graders picking up litter.*



## Spring Happenings

Spring at Community School is chock full of exciting events. Here are a few recent snapshots.

*Right (top & middle): The Annual Community School Track Meet was held on May 1 at Chaminade. Fifth and Sixth Graders competed with other area elementary schools, and put in a wonderful showing!*

*Right (below): Nursery hosted their Annual Mothers' Tea*

*Below: Community School's annual Jump Rope for Heart event has raised over \$190,000 for the American Heart Association since 1990.*



*Spring is a great time for field trips in the St. Louis area, and the classes have been going on several which culminate curriculum units. Second Grade (right) recently visited a Hindu temple and Indian restaurant to complement their study of India. SK finished off their China unit with a visit to Wei Hong Restaurant. Third Grade will soon visit the Japanese Garden and Tachibana Restaurant as part of their study of Japan.*