



COMMUNITY *Comment*

Nurturing the Gifts of Mind, Body & Spirit

October 2009

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Good Morrow! The Book Show Arrives Anon!

by Mary Lemkemeier

Looking for some new entertainment in early October? Would you like to see someone in medieval body armour split a watermelon with a sword? How does it sound to enjoy some Starbucks coffee, see your friends, and shop for good books all in the name of supporting your school? Or come hear guest author Kate McMullan speak at assembly and learn about her wide selection of books for myriad ages. Or ask grandparents to see the school and perhaps donate a book in their grandchild's name, to be rediscovered multiple times over the years!

We have much to look forward to at this year's 2009 book show, ***Ye Olde Bookfaire***, running from Friday night, October 2 through Wednesday, October 7. Our theme this year is one of medieval times — of knights and castles and travel and moats. As in past years, Community School will receive 20% of the proceeds from sales at the book show as well as hundreds of books donated to the classrooms and the Discovery Center, our library. Last year's Book Show earned over \$9,000 and more than 620 books were donated!

To allow working parents to come hither and enjoy the book show, we will have an early lowering of the drawbridge on Friday, October 2 from 6-8 pm. The students can meet a real knight and create their own crown. Children of all ages will enjoy the medieval slicing of a watermelon. Of course the book show will be open for this "Preview Knight."



The show will open again on Monday morning, October 5 and run through Wednesday, October 7. A favorite for the parents, ***Bestseller Bonanza***, will take place Monday, October 5 from 8-10:30 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., and then again on Tuesday from 8-10:30 a.m. Wonderful books recommended by Community faculty and parents will be available for purchase. Enjoy Starbucks coffee and yummy edibles while you browse.

As always, we will have a special Grandparents Day (or Special Friend/Parent). We welcome these wonderful individuals on Tuesday, October 6 during school hours. A volunteer will collect their grandchild(ren) from class so they can travel together to the book show and choose a book to donate. If a grandparent is unable to attend, they may send money in their grandchild's name and a volunteer will help their grandchild shop for a book to donate. Books are also available to purchase.

Kate McMullan is our guest author this year. Her books include *97 Ways to Train a Dragon*, an easy first chapter

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2009-2010

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Headlines:

A Message from Matthew Gould
(Excerpted from Grade Night speech)

The world is changing – rather quickly I would argue. Technology continues to explode at exponential rates. Our country's economic and political presence in the broader world is shifting. The environmental changes that we face are significant. But the truth of the matter is that the challenges and issues that our children will face as adults are challenges and issues that we cannot even imagine today. Even the jobs that our children will hold are jobs that haven't been invented yet.

But what skills are the most important? What skills will our children need to succeed? I believe there are five skills that Community School excels at imparting to children and, which I also believe, will be critically important as our children grow and continue through secondary school, college, and beyond.

The first is the School's emphasis on **critical thinking**. Critical thinking is marked by careful and exact judgment and evaluation. It is our ability to look at a problem, see it from multiple angles, and draw various conclusions.

We know Community School students have outstanding test scores. In fact, on last spring's ERB test, our students outscored other independent schools in 96% of the skill categories tested. Equally impressive, Community School class averages were higher than independent school averages in *100% of the math categories tested* - a huge tribute to the work that has been done on our math program the past couple of years. But what these test scores do not necessarily reflect is our students' ability to think critically.



Critical thinking is a huge emphasis at Community School. Because if it's true that routine work is leaving the U.S. labor force into places like China and India, and if it's true that the workplace that our children will inhabit will be qualitatively different than the one we inhabit, critical thinking will be of the utmost importance. That's why, at Community School, we constantly place an emphasis on types of thinking that are divergent, contextual, and synthesis-oriented. In short, we want children to use their brains, not just regurgitate material.

The second idea that is crucial to a Community School education is the idea of **communication**. Never have communication skills been more important. And the importance of effective communication – both written and oral – will only increase in the years to come. As the world gets smaller and technological advances increase, I believe effective communicators will be rewarded. This is an area where Community School students shine. Whether it is presenting at Authors Tea in Second Grade, making commercials in Third Grade, doing skits in Linguistics class or announcing assemblies in Sixth Grade, Community School students are regularly asked to communicate ideas big and small. And the comfort and confidence that our students derive from this is quite profound.



Headlines, continued:

The third big emphasis at Community is **creativity**. We now have an economy powered by human creativity; creativity and idea generation are central to today's economy. Unfortunately, very few schools teach students how to create knowledge. Instead, students are taught that knowledge is static and complete, and they become experts at consuming knowledge rather than producing knowledge.

At Community School, students are asked to think creatively about various problems throughout their days. Of course, students receive a heavy dose of exemplary experiences in the creative arts. But, more importantly, in all subjects and in all grades, we emphasize learning for deeper understanding, rather than mastery of lower-order facts and skills.

A fourth integral key to a Community School education is our emphasis on **collaboration**. In today's economy, innovations emerge from improvisational teams. The most pressing problems that face our world are large in scale and complex in nature, far out of the realm of any one person to resolve. The

creativity that matters in today's world is the creativity of teams.

At Community – whether in P.E., math, drama or social studies – our students are asked to collaborate. Children are learning the challenges and rewards of working together. They are learning to formulate and advocate ideas. They are learning how to listen. And they are learning to respect and appreciate difference.

And finally, the fifth crucial component of a Community School education is an emphasis on **perseverance**. The great basketball star Michael Jordan once said, *“I’ve missed over 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot – and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”*

Taking a risk at any age is hard. But if the classroom environment is nurturing, students are certainly more likely to take a risk. And what could be better than children who are comfortable taking a chance and knowing that if they make a mistake the world is not going to end

and that they have the skills to tackle tough challenges, work hard, and persevere. We want children to encounter the struggles required to build the durable self confidence they will need to face the mountains that await them. We know that all things do come full circle and all disappointments are part of the complex synergy that makes our children's lives full and rich and happy.

Critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, and perseverance are skills we want all of our students to develop. But it is also important how and where these skills are delivered. At Community, it all comes together in a caring environment where children are honored and truly loved. It all comes together in a warm, family-like atmosphere in which all can feel welcome, in which parents and the school-parent partnership are integral components of the educational process, and in which diversity is honored and valued. It all comes together on a campus in which children can explore nature, connect with the natural environment, and spend time using their bodies in recreation and play. And it is all put together by the finest group of teachers anywhere.

I am enormously excited about this year! We will continue to work to differentiate curriculum to meet individual student needs. We will open a spectacular new facility for our oldest students. We will look at sustainability issues in more depth this year. But, most importantly, we will continue to work diligently to ensure that each and every child feels safe and loved and finds a place to shine at this remarkable school.

Matthew





by Kerrigan Kaplan

Hats Off to John Lemkemeier!

Community School is thrilled to welcome our new President of the Board of Trustees, **John Lemkemeier**.

John is no stranger to Community School. Having graduated from Community School, John is a firm believer that Community School is the best private grade school in St. Louis. *“Community School preserves childhood while offering its students a great education in a phenomenal natural environment. Community is just an amazing experience for kids.”*

John graduated from Princeton University and received his J.D. from Harvard Law School. After practicing law for several years, he left to run a manufacturing firm named Contec. Then, in 2000, John and his business partner founded Sage Capital, a private equity firm based in St. Louis, where he resides as Managing Partner of the firm.

From a volunteer perspective, John describes his focus as “overtime” on Community School. *“Giving our children a Community School education and being active members of the Community family are the most important things to us,”* says John. For the past five years, John has been an active member of the Board of Trustees. He has been the Alumni Board President, was actively involved on the Search Committee that resulted in Matthew Gould’s arrival at Community, and has been on virtually every Board committee possible. *“I am really excited about this new role,”* he says, *“to continue working with Matthew and the great group of Trustees on the long-term vision for Community School.”*

John and his wife, Mary, have three children. Two have graduated from Community School and are now students at John Burroughs School (Sally, 9th grade and Jimmy, 7th grade), while Charlie is



a happy 2nd grader at Community. In addition to his new and prior roles on the Board of Trustees, John is an avid and long-time coach for his children’s sports teams – including basketball and soccer. *“More than anything, I love coaching!”* says John.

Hats off to John Lemkemeier!

Advancement Update

by Mark Palmer

The beginning of a new year naturally brings much excitement about what lies ahead, as well as the opportunity to look back in gratitude at the past. We would like to sincerely thank each and every family that generously supported Community School last year through both Annual Giving and the *Branching Out* capital campaign. It would be impossible to quantify how much your gifts mean to our students and faculty.

Looking forward, we are anxious to continue providing the best educational opportunities for our students. This is possible through our 2009-2010 Annual Giving campaign. Why is Annual Giving so important? Community’s operat-

ing budget for this year is just over \$6 million. Tuition brings in approximately \$5 million. The gap must be covered through support of Annual Giving and from the School’s endowment. Your tax-deductible annual gift enables you not only to support directly the world-class education happening every day at Community, but also to provide a tangible vote of confidence in the School’s program and mission. In early October, everyone will receive a letter with an opportunity to give. Please help us reach our goal of 100% parent participation in Annual Giving by sending in your gift or pledge. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Mark your calendars now for our biennial Cornucopia auction this year – **Communitycopia: Radiant Past, Brilliant Future!** On the evening of March 6, 2010, the School will shine during a dazzling evening of fun, friends and fundraising. Watch your Friday folders and emails for information during the next few months about auction items, sponsorship opportunities, and ways to get involved. This will be an amazing event, and we want everyone to be a part of it!





Annual Report

Our Annual Report – recognizing the true spirit of our Community School family – is published each August as our way of saying thank you for your financial support! Our deepest gratitude is extended to all of Community's families and friends who have given so generously to Annual Giving – a crucial link in providing the very best educational experience possible for our children. Occasionally and inadvertently, the name of one of our thoughtful contrib-

utors may accidentally be left off the list or misrepresented, for which we sincerely apologize. So belatedly, we would like very much to thank the following three families for their generous support of our School and our children:

Parent Partnership Level – **Kay and Mike Ruwitch**

Valued Gifts – **Laura Woods Gunderson '79 and Bill Gunderson**



Memorial Gifts – **Roz and Charles Lowenhaupt** in memory of Joe Mefferd

by Anne Sutter

Stan & Clayton Rice Family Night

Calling all 5th and 6th graders and their dads or special friends for an evening of fun! It all begins at 5:00 p.m. with outdoor games coordinated by physical education teacher Nancy Schmer, followed by a fried chicken dinner. The evening's entertainment will be provided by animal wrangler extraordinaire Serengeti Steve. It will be fun to watch as well as be part of the entertainment.

Stan and Clayton Rice Family Night, formerly Father's Night, was renamed in honor of Clayton Rice, Class of

1996, and his father Stanley who died in a house fire in 1998. The school honors them each year during this event because of the special bond between Stan and Clayton—they were often characterized as best friends. This annual event which includes 5th and 6th graders and their fathers or special friends occurs each fall.

Please save the date and time now:



Admission Notes

We all know that to really “get” Community School you have to come in the doors and experience it. We are hosting two events this fall to get potential families in the door.

First is our Open House, held in early November, which consists of a presentation (including remarks from two recent CS graduates) and a tour of the school. Next is “Monday with Matthew” — an early morning time to come in, have some coffee, and

informally chat with Head of School Matthew Gould. Parents will have the option of going on a tour afterwards.

If you know anyone who is in the process of choosing a school for their child(ren), please encourage them to attend one of our events! Word of mouth is still our single best marketing tool.

Don't forget to let prospective families know that can fill out the application form online!

Open House
Saturday, Nov. 7 - 9:30 am

Monday with Matthew
Nov. 16 - 9:00 am

Visit the Admissions section of www.communityschool.com for more information.



Parent Volunteers Play Vital Role at Community School - Get Involved!

by Shari Bussmann

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers and parent involvement is closely linked to academic achievement and self-confidence. So, what are you waiting for? Say "yes" to volunteering. You can bring a lot to Community School in the form of your energy, time, and ideas.

Here are some ways to get involved:

The Community Parent Association (CPA) provides a variety of opportunities for volunteers that accommodate many interests and time

commitments. Committees include Book Covering and Repair, Book Show, Cornucopia, Discovery Center, Faculty Recognition/Hospitality, Fall Picnic, Stan & Clayton Rice Family Night, Flower Sale, Grandparents & Special Friends Day, Mailing, School Tours/New Parent Hospitality, Community Comment, Yearbook and School Store.

All parents are welcome and encouraged to join in a committee to volunteer a little or a lot. There is a place for everyone and it is a great way to meet other parents and families in our

community! You can find the list of CPA officers and committee chairs on page 12 of your Buzz Book, if you would like to volunteer or if you have any questions about a particular committee.

The end of the year Annual Meeting on May 5 is a day to celebrate a year's worth of volunteer success achieved through the Community Parent Association. Find a committee that interests you and get involved today!

Focus on Faculty

Community School is thrilled to announce P.E. teacher **Christine Bugnitz** has been honored with the Independent Schools of St. Louis *Teacher of Distinction* award, as well as the Emerson *Excellence in Teaching* award. Christine was one of four independent school teachers to win a grant. Her proposal was geared toward starting a community drumming program. Congratulations to Christine!



Many teachers took part in professional development this summer: **Debbie Barmeier, Lynn Christopher,**

Kathy Fitzgerald, Cathy Haines, Janice Kamps, Suzie Keefe, Amy Kilpatrick, Jessica Klingbeil, Rob Knight, and Debbie Willis attended the Differentiation Conference in Chicago. **Jennifer Haney, David Lang, Andy Van Der Tuin** and **Caroline Zarinelli** attended the Boston Arts Academy. **Lori Marusic, Sonie Rao** and **Matthew Gould** attended the Curriculum Mapping Institute. **Sherea Spinner** attended a week-long math workshop in Boston and **Carolyn Rhett** attended an Orton-Gillingham conference.

During in-service week, faculty members participated in a daylong math workshop led by author and math educator **Greg Tang**. (see picture at right)

Congratulations to **Caroline Zarinelli** and **David Lang** for winning four awards at the Kansas City 48-Hour Film Festival.

Faculty were busy in less academic ways this summer as well. Congratulations to **Marty Hoessle** and Sara Forrester (now **Sara Ramprasad**) on their marriages, as well as **Sonie Rao**, who became engaged.





Welcome New Faculty & Extended Day Teachers!



Sherea Spinner, while new to Sixth Grade this year, is a familiar face around Community, having been a long-term substitute in Third Grade last year. Sherea has a masters in English language and literature and previous experience teaching Sixth Grade in Maryland. She says, *"I'm glad to be part of Community. Sixth Grade is a very exciting year for the kids!"*



This is not so much a "welcome" as a "welcome back" for **Judy Tisdale**. Judy retired several years ago after teaching at Community for over 30 years. And now she's back to teach 1st & 3rd Grade Science. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience. Judy's comment on her return? *"It's so wonderful to be back with all the children."*



Welcome to **Barb Grigsby**, Community's student teacher from Washington University. Barb is a senior majoring in elementary education and history. During her stay at Community this semester, she is working in Third Grade North with veteran teachers Marty Hoessle and Mindy Bezdichek. Barb comments, *"I just love the kids and the community atmosphere here at Community. I'm incredibly excited to be here."*

New Extended Day Staff

We would like to extend a huge welcome to all of our new Extended Day staff! They make the After School Program hum until 6:00 every night. If you see them, please stop and say hi!

Helen Becker, Tarius Gucciardo, Matt Jaworski, Holly Nevels, Lauren Schlappi & Kemper Wisland





Book Show, continued:

book which manages to avoid violence; *Keep the Lid on It Pandora* which, along with other books in her myth-o-mania series, introduces us to mythology in an inviting manner; *Fluffy Goes Apple Picking* which follows a guinea pig on a class trip; and *I Stink!* in which – what else? – a garbage truck eats its breakfast of trash. She will speak at assembly on Wednesday, October 7 and then

be available for book signing. Afterward she will visit with students in the Discovery Center to share her passion for writing. It is always a treat to have a published author so accessible for the students!

We look forward to jousting with or seeing you at Community School's 58th Annual Book Show!



Community Candid



Sometimes just a little quiet time to look at a book is the perfect antidote to a busy day!



3rd Grade working on trust falls in P.E. under the careful guidance of Mrs. Schmer.

(Above pictures): 5th Grade recently presented a Thursday assembly skit showing what they've learned so far about the Constitution, and specifically the separation of powers between the executive, legislative & judicial branches of government.