



Lower School Notes
May 6, 2011
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“Keith Country Day School prepares children for lives of meaning and purpose.”

From the Head of the Lower School

Dear Lower School Parents,

Memories of May didn't seem quite so cold five years ago when I last spent May in the north central US! Yikes – it's cold outside! However, things are certainly warming up here in the Lower School as we head down the backstretch of the school year. This edition of Parents Notes is dedicated to honoring our Lower School educators in celebration of “Teacher Appreciation Week.”

Being good at anything requires dedication, a body of knowledge, training, experience, and a desire to do one's best. This is certainly true for educators and then some. Like all competent professionals, good educators are dedicated, possess expertise in a body of knowledge, are well-trained, have both teaching and life experiences, talent and a desire to do their best; they also possess that unique spark of energy, a gift, that seems to connect them to the source of life and one's spirit. In a nutshell, a quality educator is a gift to the human race and a bridge that connects the spirit of humanity.

As adults and more so, as parents, we are all teachers whether we like it or not because children watch our actions and, like it or not, they will learn much more from watching what we do than from listening to us. Adults who choose the profession of teaching, however, and more specifically, those in our profession who excel at what they do seem to possess a certain type of “cosmic” energy. Think about it, day after day after day teachers assume the responsibility of creating an environment containing multiple minds coming from multiple backgrounds with multiple interests, skills, and affinities! The environment is just the beginning as it is the designing and implementation of learning activities that fuels the learning process through experience. Additionally, these same adults are charged with creating and maintaining relationships with the parents who have varying expectations, perspectives, and needs. Add a layer of administrative oversight (which should be designed to be supportive and helpful to our enterprise) and you have a recipe that has the potential to spell disaster, craziness or, more hopefully, a synergy that creates something greater than the sum of its parts! Think about it!

Yet, day after day, educators enter the arena of mind-melding, of dream-building, decision-making and of helping kids negotiate their thoughts and actions into something we call school and learning, all of which will hopefully set the stage for caring, responsible, productive lives. In partnership with you, the parents, we hold hands with hopes and aspirations for those to come. When you look at a teacher, you are looking at the past, present, and future for it is their collective actions and efforts that connect one generation to the next; that perpetuates cultural values; that defines the future; that links humanity.

I am so very honored and grateful to be an educator and teacher and I am extremely honored and appreciative of having the privilege to serve our faculty here at Keith Country Day School in the Lower School. Next time you see your child's teacher, I encourage you to acknowledge the role they play in your child's life and to thank, encourage, and support their efforts. They are special people who deserve our utmost respect and appreciation. Honoring them can only encourage and further motivate them to do their best to honor you and your child. Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Terry Factor

In appreciation of...

The following Parent Volunteers...for their time, energy and support of last Friday's KPA Walk-A-Thon event! Led by Walk-A-Thon coordinator Jennifer Wehrstein, this group of parents once again modeled what happens when folks come together to support a good cause! Thanks specifically to...

- Jennifer Wehrstein for serving in the capacity as the coordinator for this event (second year in a row)! You can always count on Mrs. Wehrstein "taking care of business" with a warm smile and a most inviting demeanor. She's a wiz at covering all of the details, mobilizing parent support, and enjoying the process and everyone along the way! Thanks Mrs. Wehrstein!!!!
- Parents Carina Ferrara-Furst, Rita Pirrello-Epperson, Sam Hall, Rebecca Olson, Saman Hanif, Sonya Bowyer, Anke Schell, Sara Olson, Gabe Wassner, Rob Nuñez, and numerous others along the way!
- Teachers Ms. Rachel Tedrick and Mrs. Kelly Aldrich and....
- Rocco Blazina – Mr. Maintenance!

KPA Appreciation of Our Teachers....Thanks so much for the wonderful snacks and spreads for lunch! We feel your appreciation and thank you! ***And for the new Kuerig Coffee maker that sits shiny and new in Tati's Room – a real treat! Thank you!***

Mr. Martin McDaniel and the Middle School Band Students...for sharing their talents and love for music! Thanks for taking the time to expose our students to music and the instruments that make it!

Those Parents Who Volunteered to Drive for Kite Day...because without your time and support, there would be no way for us to celebrate a day of kites flying! Together, We Fly High!

Learning Corner Notes

Standardized Testing Week for Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders, May 9 – 16: Third and fourth graders will spend a portion of each day this coming week taking the "ITBS" (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) while the fifth grade students will take the "ERB" (Educational Records Bureau). Information was mailed home to parents this past Wednesday regarding these assessments. Standardized tests are typically administered during late April or by mid-May in both public and independent schools. This annual ritual provides valuable feedback based on national norms that inform the teacher and parents about a child's individual growth as well as the faculty about the effectiveness of our programs. Parents of students in grades three through five will receive a summary of how their child scored on these sometime during the summer after the tests are scored and mailed back to Keith.

Lower School Student Council Update: The fourth quarter student council began meeting after we returned to school from spring break and here's what's happening:

- ***"Coins for Caring" Fund Raising Initiative*** – With a major disaster in the form of a tsunami in Japan and the devastation caused by tornadoes in the southern US, our student council is initiating a fund raising session to support the people affected by these tragedies. Beginning Monday, May 9, the Student Council is encouraging students to gather loose coins from around the house, dip into their piggy banks and bring these to the school. We will conduct the drive for two weeks and announce the amount of money raised at our May 20th assembly. The money will be designated in equal parts to the local Rockford chapter of the Red Cross to support the relief efforts in Japan and the southern U.S.
- ***All Things Playground*** - playground guidelines have been revised and are being posted in classrooms and on the playground. The Student Council has also written up preliminary sets of game rules for tetherball, flag football, four-square and capture-the-flag. These will be approved by the Student Council and posted outside as well. The student council expects students to honor the rules so everyone has a chance to enjoy themselves during recess and after school.

- **Planning an End-of-the-Year Celebration** – The current Student Council will begin planning the EOY (end-of-year) celebration for all Student Council representatives who have served on the council this school year. A date and activities will be selected in the near future. This celebration will most likely take place after school during the last week of May before school ends.

Summer Camp: Looking for an opportunity to provide your child with some fun this summer? Don't look any further than our very own 'Summer Enrichment Adventure!' Weekly themes will fuel exciting learning opportunities filled with activity and adventure! **To register, return the completed camp form and a \$25 deposit for each week. The camp is open to Keith students in Cottage through 5th grade and students from JrKinder to 5th grade from the community** Since this camp is open to youth in the entire Rockford community, feel free to invite friends in your neighborhood to enroll as well!

Who is Teaching What??? A lack of information certainly doesn't do anything to help squelch the rumor mill when it comes to who will be teaching what this coming year. Your patience regarding this important task is much appreciated and you can look forward to receiving a letter next Friday, May 13, that indicates teacher placements for the 2011-12 school year.

Library Closing: The library will be officially closing next Friday, May 13. The reason for the early closing is due to the important task of inventorying books. This lengthy process demands minimal traffic of both books and people and is essential to maintaining a library that contains a wide range of literature. If you have any outstanding library books, please turn them into your child's classroom teacher or put them in the drop-box in the Intermediate Building hallway by Friday, May 13. Any outstanding books may result in a replacement cost that will be charged to your child's account.

Lower School Calendar for 2011-12 School Year: We are hoping to have the final Lower School calendar ready for distribution when report cards are mailed out in early June.

MENU for Cottage through 5th Grade Students:

May 9 to 13

	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Gaylord Commons	Meatball Sandwich	Pasta	Basil Chicken	Cold Meat Sandwich	Grilled Cheese
Tati's Room (KC, JrK, Kinder)	PB & J	Pasta	Chicken Dinos	Turkey Sandwich	Grilled Cheese

May 16 to 20

	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Gaylord Commons	Hamburger	Taco Bar	Hot Dog	Chicken Strips	Pizza Day
Tati's Room (KC, JrK, Kinder)	Hamburger	Tacos	Hot Dog	Chicken Strips	Pizza Day

Mark Your Calendar

TONIGHT	6:00 PM - Wine and Beer Tasting at Briggs Mansion; Class projects, parking spaces and more will be auctioned! Tickets are available at the door.
May 8	Mother's Day
May 9-12	Standardized Testing for grades 3, 4 & 5 - make sure your child has had a good breakfast and a good night's sleep; try to avoid appointments during school hours this week; also, last week of library classes; please see Mr. Factor's letter sent home today
May 9	12:20 PM - Student Council meeting in Mr. Factor's office
May 9	3:30-5:00 PM - Cub Scout Pack #464 meeting in Art Room
May 10	8:30 to 10:00 AM – Cottage's <i>Moments with Mom</i>
May 11	National Honor Society blood drive; 12:00 – 5:00 PM; student parking lot; please consider donating a pint of blood; call Julie Swift to schedule an appointment
May 12	3:15-4:15 PM - Brownie Troop meeting
May 13	Grandparent's Day; 8:00 AM to approximately 11:00 AM in the Upper School gymnasium; please make sure grandparents RSVP to the Lower School office by Tuesday, May
May 13	Final library classes; ALL BOOKS need to be returned to the Abegg Library or book drop
May 16	12:20 PM - Student Council meeting
May 16	3:30-5:00 PM - Cub Scout Pack #464 meeting in Art Room
May 17	8:00 AM - 5 th grade parents can tour Middle & Upper School; meet near the Administrative offices (or choose to attend on May 19)
May 17	12:15-1:45 PM - 1 st grade to Skyrise Senior Apartments
May 19	8:00 AM - 5 th grade parents can tour Middle & Upper School; meet near the Administrative offices (or choose to attend on May 17)
May 23	Final meeting of Cub Scout Pack #464
May 26	5:30 PM - 5 th Grade Step Up Program in Gaylord Commons
May 27	Cottage & JrKinder Field Day during the AM session - 11:45 AM dismissal for Cottage & JrKinder students
	Field Day for Kinder to 5 th grade students:
	11:30-12:00 Lunch with students and parents on the soccer field; a hot dog lunch can be purchased or parents can bring a lunch for their child
	12:00-12:15 Students in grades Kinder to 5 th grade join up with their teacher on the soccer field
	12:15-2:15 Field day events on the soccer field; grades will rotate through these events; parents are encouraged to stay and follow their child through these events
	2:15-2:30 Students return to their classroom
	2:30-3:00 Final time in classrooms
	This is the Lower School's FINAL Day of School; normal dismissal time for Kinder to 5 th grade; NO SAP Program; progress reports will be mailed June 6
June 2	7:00 PM - Keith's Graduation at Rockford College
June 6	Lower School progress reports mailed
June 6-10	Week 1 of Keith's Summer Camp; Theme is <i>Sports and Yard Games</i> taught by Ms. Tedrick; registration required

Announcements

International Wine And Beer Tasting Tonight

Tonight, beginning at 6:00 PM, at the Briggs Mansion, the Keith Country Day School Board of Trustees is hosting the International Wine and Beer Tasting until 9:00 PM. Hors d'oeuvres, wines from 30 different countries, and several rare beers will be available to sample. For non-beer or wine drinkers, the event will also offer international coffees as well as bottled water. Tickets are \$25 per person and can be purchased at the door. In addition to the mansion parking lot, parking is also available in the Swedish American Hospital lot across the street.

Along with the wonderful foods/desserts, beer and wines, the event is hosting a LIVE auction for personalized Keith parking spaces, Lower School class projects and an extraordinary piece of art from the well-known artist, Nicolosi. **All auction items are available for online bids now.** Go to the keithschool.com home page, click on the *Online Auction* link to bid on your item of choice. **Online bidding will be open until 3:00 PM TODAY, May 6.** Special THANKS to the Raleigh family for providing the event use of the Briggs Mansion. We hope to see you there!

Walk-A-Thon Pledges Now Due

All Lower School students participated in Keith's 4th annual Walk-A-Thon last Friday. Pledge donations are now due. **Thank you** to everyone who helped make this event happen, especially chair, Jennifer Wehrstein and all her assistants! Proceeds will benefit Keith Parents' Association.

Grandparent's Day at Keith Country Day School Next Friday

Grandparent's Day at Keith is scheduled for Friday, May 13. The event will begin at 8:00 AM with breakfast for our grandparents in the Upper School gym. Grandparents will remain in the Upper School gym for the musical program, which begins at 8:45 AM. Parents are invited to join us for the program, but will be asked to sit in the bleacher area. All Lower School students, Cottage through 5th grade, will participate in the musical program. Kinder, 1st and 2nd grade string students will perform first, so remember to send your child's violin! This year we are asking students to wear a **SOLID, BRIGHT COLORED, COLLARED POLO SHIRT, jean shorts (girls can wear a jean skirt), white socks and any colored tennis shoes for the program. Second through 5th grade students are also asked to wear a BLACK t-shirt UNDER their polo shirt.** PLEASE, no sandals or flip flops for safety reasons. Please remind your child's grandparents or guest to RSVP to Marti or Melody in the Lower School office so we may plan for food. We hope all students will have either a grandparent or family/friend in attendance on this special day! For questions call Marti or Melody in the Lower School office, 815-231-1114.

5th Grade Parents Invited to Tour Middle School

Fifth grade parents are invited to tour the Middle and Upper School building. This tour is an opportunity for current 5th grade parents to become familiar with the space your child will enter next fall. Your tour guide, Marcia Aramovich, will meet you near the Administrative offices on either Tuesday, May 17, at 8:00 AM, or Thursday, May 19, at 8:00 AM. No reservation is necessary. If you have questions, please call Marcia at 815-399-8850 extension 144.

Lost and Found

Please visit the Lost and Found items, located just past the foyer door in the Intermediate Building. We have accumulated a large amount of clothing, gloves, hats and other miscellaneous items.

Admissions Advocate

Parents, there is still time for your friends to visit and tour Keith. Some grade levels still have space available for the fall. Bring a friend to see Keith. For an information packet and a guided tour, please contact Marcia Aramovich, Admissions Director, at 815-399-8850 extension 144 or email; marcia.aramovich@keithschool.net.