

HEADS' LETTER

JUNE 25, 2009

AN ABUNDANCE OF GRATITUDE: A FEELING THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

ENDINGS: The school year ended in the same way it began with smiles, appreciation, meaningful interactions, and anticipation for what would be coming next. Hats off to our teachers for working right up to the last minute with our students and then arranging for the end of the year plans to capitalize on the energy that is created through celebration, recognition, and fun! New traditions were started, some traditions were tweaked, and others held tight to what seemed to always hit a homerun for them.

PURPOSE: Actually, the last days of school represented exactly how we work as a professional learning community throughout the year. We seek to balance innovation and tradition with research, creativity and good common sense. We are always looking to grow and improve. We add to what works, but when a new idea comes along that seems to take us to a new level, we go forward understanding that progress is all about "raising the bar."

PRIDE: On Tuesday, June 2, our eighth graders succeeded in raising the bar with an outstanding Candlelight Ceremony. The eighth graders received laughter, nostalgic tears, and respect from the student body and the 300 parents and guests in attendance. They brilliantly delivered their "I hereby bequeath..." with poise, confidence, clarity, and sincerity.

TRADITION: The "Moving-Up Ceremony" began immediately following the eighth grade Candlelight Ceremony. The lights were turned on and the Class of 2010 was eagerly awaiting their opportunity to "move on up" to the top of the bleachers to take their role as the leaders of the school. Each grade followed as they experienced their rite of passage...Parents cried and laughed as they watched the oldest to the youngest scramble to their new places hollering out in unison their Class of 20xx. It's always exciting to see kindergarten students move to seats and bleachers and the fifth grade cross over from the elementary side to the middle school bleachers. A special treat is watching our littlest IDSers wait patiently for their turn. When our new 3's took their place as the Class of 2020, it seems like such a long time from now....but is it really?

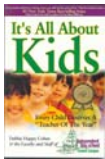
ACCOMPLISHMENT: On the evening of June 3, Corbett Hall was packed with parents, relatives, friends, and current and past teachers, for the Class of 2009 graduation ceremony that featured each graduate's reflections and contributions. They all advanced to the microphone several times throughout the ceremony to give a history of their experiences and to share gratitude to those that made it possible for them to have an IDS education. It was their time to shine and they did! After Board President, Jim Conlin, eloquently charged them with creating a promising future, the diploma and medal ceremony began and followed by the recessional. Then of course, the party began at the Emerald Greens Country Club.

DEVOTION: Hats off to an amazing class of eighth grade parents who spent hours planning every detail so that the party would be a smash hit to honor this milestone for the class of 2009! They succeeded with everyone exclaiming "WOW" when they entered the party room! A huge thanks to Allied Graphics for donating so many of the props that created the backdrop which emphasized their theme of soaring graduates! They made

sure every detail was handled. The parents also creatively and successfully designed and raised the funds for the "Legacy Lounge" on the first floor in the middle school common space. The parents lovingly chose a center rug and comfortable couches and chairs to create a wonderful gathering for the leaders of the school, and the whole class contributed to the purchase. Future classes will enjoy the benefit of the generosity of the Class of 2009.

TEACHERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE: On Thursday, June 4, our teachers met on the second floor of the New Building in the Grand Room to begin the first of five full days of in-service and planning for next year. We began with an exercise to share what each grade did for our last few days with our students. Before sharing, teachers first gathered, for 15 minutes, in their teams to plan what they would share and how each teacher would have an equal opportunity to participate in presenting to the rest of the faculty. All 18 specials teachers were assigned to a grade level for the last day and they joined in with that team to discuss and present the lesson plans.

We only wish we had video-taped the presentations. The teachers were soooooo proud of their students, spoke with such love about each and every one of them, told us stories that made us laugh, cry, and feel pride, and reminded all of us how honored we are to work with such a dedicated and creative team of professionals. Ninety minutes later, everyone knew we had something so special that had been shared....appreciation for the talent of our colleagues, their dedication, their skill, and their huge hearts filled the room. **SO: PARENTS,** it was very



clear: **IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR KIDS! WE LOVE THEM AND SO ENJOYED EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM. THANKS FOR INVESTING IN AN IDS EDUCATION! WE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AND WE APPRECIATE YOU! WE TAKE PRIDE IN EVERY IDSer and look forward to another great and grand year in 2009 - 2010.**

THE ECONOMY MAY AFFECT OUR LAKEWATCH PROGRAM

Middle School Science Teacher, Gery Morey created the Lakewatch Program with neighbor, Jim Yost, ten years ago. This project has been a part of our 7th grade curriculum giving community service right here on Lake Lipsey and connecting our findings with a state funded environmental program. Mrs. Morey recently received a letter that this program might be eliminated due to budget changes. We thought our IDS community would like to keep up to date with this news. Last week Mrs. Morey responded to the director of the program with the following letter:

"Dear Mr. Canfield, I received your letter concerning the budget update for LAKEWATCH and wanted to respond. I teach middle school science at the Independent Day School – Corbett Campus in Tampa, Florida. Our school owns property along the shore of Lake Lipsey, and we have been collecting LAKEWATCH data for more than 10 years. My students love doing the water quality tests, and LAKEWATCH has become an integral part of my curriculum. Once a month, every 7th grader runs several tests (such as dissolved oxygen, nitrate, and phosphate) from the shore of Lake Lipsey, and records their data in a journal throughout the year. We also have a parent volunteer who takes two students out on the lake each month to collect water samples for the University of Florida The kids love seeing the data they collect displayed on the LAKEWATCH website, and this program offers them the opportunity to participate in real-life, hands-on science. Of course, my entire school supports the continuation of LAKEWATCH.

Part of my LAKEWATCH unit involves sending student-written letters to residents living around Lake Lipsey LAKEWATCH areas, sharing our data, and encouraging them to get involved with LAKEWATCH. This is normally done at the end of the unit, however, next year I intend to read your letter to my classes in August and challenge them to develop some possible courses of action Each 7th grade class will be involved, and I imagine we will write letters supporting the continuation of LAKEWATCH. Could you suggest who we should write to, and what needs to be said?

We appreciate the dedication you have shown to LAKEWATCH and hope we can help preserve this valuable program. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail and/or phone. Sincerely, Gery Morey

MORE NEWS

END OF YEAR APPRECIATION: We have received so many wonderful letters, e-mails and comments of appreciation from our families this year about the experience your children have had from an IDS education. Please know that we thank you. Our goal remains the same: to create an extraordinary learning experience for our children using research-based brain friendly teaching and learning strategies that create both joy and challenge for our learners. We all learn at different rates, with different strengths, with different likes, with different styles and different personalities and on and on and on. Working to connect, delight and inspire our students in turn brings us all a lot of joy! We appreciate living in this win-win atmosphere.

DUKE TIP RECOGNITION CEREMONY: The Duke University Seventh Grade Talent Search is the largest program of its kind in the nation, representing participation from nearly 6,000 middle schools in a 16 state region. The Talent Search identifies academically talented seventh graders based on standardized test scores achieved while attending elementary or middle school. Candidates are invited to take either the college SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Assessment college entrance examination. This is always an opportunity to honor academic excellence. Thirty one IDS seventh graders qualified for the Talent Search this year. Of this group, 24 agreed to rise to the challenge by taking either the SAT or ACT. They were all recognized at a Monday Morning Meeting in May.

Those who took the test had their scores compared to other seventh graders' performance nationwide. The following nine IDS students scored at such a high level on the college test that they were invited to be recognized at a state ceremony held in May, at New College in Sarasota. IDS parent Lynne Poole reported that "the students, along with many parents in attendance, received encouragement from an inspiring speech by New College's President. Everyone was proud as our IDSers received medals and certificates from the President and the Duke Tip staff." Our IDS-CC state recognition representatives were. **Teresa Chorvat , Nirja Patel, Delia Ferguson, Josh Kartheiser, Pedro Lima, Austin McCullers, Anthony Pellingra, Caroline Poole, and Cole Shaler.**

IDS BOOK FAIR WITH BARNES & NOBLE: A WIN-WIN: Our librarian, Ms. Fields, is sending a huge "thanks a million" to our IDS families for their support of the spring Book Fair! The IDS Laney Library/Media Center received 20% of the sales from the book fair, and thanks to the entire school, we earned close to \$4000 toward media and books for our library. Smiles of joy began with a Sunday's pajama story time and Cheerios' Bingo.

Throughout the week, all students grades 3 -8 visited Barnes & Noble to shop for summer reading. During the Book Fair's Wednesday Primary Night, Jazzy Juniors and Broadway Babies dance troupes performed to the delight of the audience, followed by a beautiful Warriors Pride choral performance for 45 fabulous minutes! We all send a huge thanks to IDS dance teacher, Lisa Ferlita, and chorus directors, Barbara McBride and Michael LeBlanc, for their masterful leadership with our IDS performers. Thank you to all parents and students for your support. Ms. Fields wants to send an extra special thanks, on behalf of all of IDS, to IDS volunteer PFA Chairs Milene Lima and Cathy Peacock for coordinating a fantastic Book Fair! They have been a winning team for many years, and our Laney Library has been the beneficiary of their hard work.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS: SUMMER PROGRAM OPPORTUNITY: CSA is offering private and pair-lessons throughout the summer months for those wanting to take the opportunity to hone their skills in music, band, dance, art, and/or acting. Please e-mail Mr. McColley at csa@idsyes.com for more information.

CSA was quite busy this spring with some fabulous fine arts entertainment with music and dance recitals and two musical theatre productions. Pictures can be viewed and purchased by visiting <http://www.momentshare.com/theROSTICKgroup/>. Thanks to all of the members of the CSA. Approximately 300 students of all ages participate in our Community School of the Arts throughout the year.

CAMP IDS 2009 is in full swing. We have our very own alums joining our teachers to provide service, a great attitude, a consistently fun experience and teamwork that make CAMP IDS the place to be. It's typical IDS style with one week options for full day or half day camps. The musical theatre programs are the only camps that last for two to four weeks. The Broadway hit *Godspell* will be performed for the whole community this weekend on Friday 12:30 and 6:30 p.m. and Saturday 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. There is still time to sign up for the musical "*Thoroughly Modern Millie*." It runs half days for four weeks beginning June 29. Lisa Ferlita, Barbara McBride, and Jennifer Barnekow will direct the production. To reserve a camp, please call the office at (813) 961-3087 to find where the openings are or to get on a waiting list for a particular camp.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENCLOSURES FOUND IN THE END OF SCHOOL YEAR MAILING

REPORT CARDS: Report cards are included in the final mailing. Each report card has grades and comments from all trimesters. Another hard copy is kept in your child's school record file in addition to having an electronic record.

SAT TEST SCORES (for 2nd through 8th grades). We are smiling. Once again our **average school wide SAT 10 test scores** were in the **highest range with a 7 stanine!** Scores of 7, 8 and 9 are ranked as above average, scores that are 4's, 5's and 6's are in the mid or average range. Each grade level's group report from the test described the "typical IDS student" as scoring overall in the highest range (7, 8, or 9).

We do want to emphasize strongly that **this is just one assessment**. Some students tend to vary from year to year depending on their reaction to a test. Scores can be inflated as well as unrelated to what the student can actually accomplish. Overall class performance on a day-to-day basis has equal significance when noting a child's potential. Test taking definitely comes easier to some than others, so we must have multiple ways to assess student progress. If you have any questions, please call and we will meet with you or arrange for the appropriate person(s) to answer your questions.

SUMMER READING LIST: The second copy enclosed.

ORDERING REQUIRED for IDS-CC POLO SHIRTS and MIDDLE SCHOOL P.E. UNIFORMS: The order forms can be downloaded from the electronic version of this Heads' Letter. The two order forms are as follows:

Number 1 is the order form for the **required IDS polo shirts** for field trips and special events. **1.** Please fill out the form to be sure that your IDSer(s) get their shirts by the opening of school. **As a reminder:** When shopping for clothes, we are asking that you buy khaki or black pants, shorts or skirts with appropriate length to be worn with the IDS-CC polo shirts for all field trips and special events. We also suggest that you purchase more than one shirt because there are often events and trips back to back.

Number 2 is the **REQUIRED P.E. UNIFORMS FOR All MIDDLE SCHOOLers**. The earlier the forms and payment are sent in the more likely your IDSer will have what is needed on the first day of school.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES (3rd THROUGH 8th GRADE): We have discovered that store sales for school supplies are often more economical than what we can offer! Yes, our purchasing of school supplies provides convenience, but it comes with a cost. So this year, we will provide the lists, and we ask you to do the shopping. The lists are attached on our website at <http://www.idses.com/heads-letter.htm>. Hard copies will arrive in the Back to School mailing on August 1, 2009.

ENFORCEMENT OF DRESS CODE!!! PLEASE READ ENCLOSURE BEFORE SHOPPING FOR SCHOOL CLOTHES! Remember to shop for polo styled collared shirts and/or t-shirts with sleeves in any color. Shirts with writing are to be left for places other than school. We will adhere to this policy and students needing reminders will be charged for an IDS prism colored polo-styled shirt with logo to be worn for the day. (It comes in all colors.) Shoes must be closed-toed for safety at play and healthy outdoor activities. Athletic shoes (commonly called sneakers) are preferred.

The following clothing types are to be worn other than during school times: low cut shirts, tank top shirts, torn jeans, short shorts, flip flops etc. The student handbook for 2009 - 2010 will reinforce with detail this policy. Purchasing IDS "prism" polo styled logo shirts in 5 - 6 colored options will be an economical way to dress appropriately for school every day. It also takes away the worry about what to wear! ☺

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER & VOLLEYBALL CONDITIONING CLINIC: There will be a conditioning clinic for all Middle School girls prior to tryouts for sixth through eighth grades and a soccer clinic for conditioning to prepare for the season prior to school starting. Note the information enclosed and on the electronic Heads' Letter.