

Nursery School News

A Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School

1066 Washington Road · Pittsburgh, PA · 15228 · (412) 531-2644

Volume XXXIII, Issue 7

March 2004

From Jane: Words of Wisdom



The other day Geoff Hurd, Pat Hurd's husband and a member of the nursery school board of trustees, e-mailed me a list of quotes from Marion Wright Edelman. She has always been one of my favorite role models and a political activist for children. She founded the Children's Defense Fund and coined the phrase "Leave No Child Behind." Unfortunately, the phrase was picked up by the current administration and used in the effort to push for an educational agenda that has instituted educational reforms on the national, state, and local levels with the express goal of ensuring America's competitive edge in the new "information-based economy."

The current educational policies have instituted standardized assessment at the pre-school (Head Start) and kindergarten levels, that have had the result of "pushing" academic curriculum into the preschool while neglecting the social and emotional development of young children. Something that as you all know is near and dear to my heart. It is important that we protect our children from over scheduling, and pressuring them into academics too quickly and early in their lives. This is the unfortunate result of policies and curriculum built on the false premise that learning can be accelerated in very young children when information is "fed" to them in small decontextualized bits, such as the use of flash cards and skill drills.

When Edelman coined the phrase "Leave No Child Behind," she was not referring to gaining a competitive edge. She was referring to social justice and the importance of nurturing children and advocating government policies that would insure a legacy that would support children and families so that no child would ever be left alone, left with neglected needs, or would be unsafe.

But back to my original thoughts and Marion Wright Edelman's quotes. Edelman is truly a "wise woman" and someone who we can all benefit from listening to

in terms of our parenting and the choices that we make in life for our children and ourselves. Here are some of her quotes – read them and know that she speaks the truth.

- Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.
- I don't care what my children choose to do professionally, just as long as within their choices they understand they've got to give something back.
- If you as parents cut corners, your children will too. If you lie, they will too. If you spend all your money on yourselves and tithe no portion of it for charities, colleges, churches, synagogues, and civic causes, your children won't either. And if parents snicker at racial and gender jokes, another generation will pass on the poison adults still have not had the courage to snuff out.
- Being considerate of others will take you and your children further in life than any college or professional degree.
- Teach your children that they're not obligated to win. They're obligated to keep trying to do the best they can every day.
- We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.
- The challenge of social justice is to evoke a sense of community that we need to make our nation a better place, not just a safer place.

Inside this issue:	
<i>From Jane</i>	1-2
<i>Mayfair</i>	2
<i>Mayfair Prizes</i>	3
<i>Strawberry Jam</i>	3
<i>Plant Sale</i>	3
<i>Hot Topic</i>	3
<i>Lenten Series</i>	4
<i>Parent Burnout</i>	4
<i>Board Nominations</i>	4
<i>Mark Your Calendar</i>	5

(cont.)

From Jane: (Continued)

- If we don't stand up for children then we don't stand for much.
- Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for children that they forget that they themselves are really the experts.
- Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.
- I'm doing what I think I was put on this earth to do. And I'm really grateful to have something that I'm passionate about and that I think is profoundly important.
- My faith has been the driving thing of my life. I think it is important that people who are perceived as liberals not be afraid of talking about moral and community values.
- When Jesus Christ asked little children to come to him, he didn't say only rich children, or White children, or children with two-parent families, or children who didn't have a mental or physical handicap. He said, "Let all children come unto me."
- Investing in children is not a national luxury or a national choice. It's a national necessity. If the foundation of your house is crumbling, you don't say you can't afford to fix it while you're building astronomically expensive fences to protect it from outside enemies. The issue is not are we going to pay – it's are we going to pay now, up front, or are we going to pay a whole lot more later on.
- No one, Eleanor Roosevelt said, can make you feel inferior without your consent. Never give it.
- Respect other people only on the basis of their individual character and personal efforts, struggles, and achievements. Never defer to another on the basis of his or her race, religion, gender, class, fame, wealth, or position.
- To my own children: I seek your forgiveness for all the times I talked when I should have listened; got angry when should have been patient; acted when I should have waited; feared when I should have delighted; scolded when I should have encouraged; criticized when I should have complimented; said no when I should have said yes and yes when I should have said no. I did not know a whole lot about parenting or how to ask for help. I often tried too hard and wanted and demanded so much, and mistakenly sometimes tried to mold you into my image of what I wanted you to be rather than discovering and nourishing you as you emerged and grew.
- Don't let anything get in the way of your education – her father's last words to her, before Arthur Wright died when Marian was 14.



Mayfair 2004

Katherine Doyle is chairing Mayfair this year with Laurel Flaherty's help. This year I am planning to change Mayfair from our primary fundraiser (this has now become our annual fall wine tasting) to an end of year

family fun time/ picnic. Katherine is planning an outdoor barbeque (weather permitting) to go along with the fun and games. We will still have all of the games, little prizes, pony rides, moon bounce, face painting, etc. The one thing that we are planning to change in order to simplify things is to no longer have the Chinese auction. It tends to be complicated, it takes lots of volunteer hours to organize and carry out, and every year some of the children are upset when they don't "win" a toy. We will continue to give the children prizes for the games, but we will simply no longer ask parents to donate the more expensive toys that the children buy a chance to win. Personally I am more comfortable with *everyone* winning a prize for each game played.

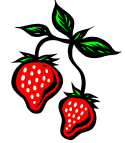
So, Mayfair will be a fun day primarily for the children. We may make a little money, which is always nice, but fund raising will no longer be the primary reason for having Mayfair. It will be a time to celebrate the ending of the school year and for everyone to get together in order to have a fun time and say goodbye.

On that note anyone who is interested in helping out should give Katherine Doyle a call at 412-341-4732 or Laurel Flaherty at 412-278-0301.

Mayfair Prizes

Once again – an opportunity to get rid of old kids' meal giveaways!! Drop them off in Jane's office and we'll use them for prizes at Mayfair.

Strawberry Jam



Mindy's classes will be making our "Simply St. Paul's" strawberry jam once again this year. Contributions of sugar, liquid fruit pectin (Certo) and mason jars (1/2 pint and pint sizes) will be gratefully accepted in the red box in Jane's office. The jars do NOT need to be new, just clean and unbroken. New rings and lids will be purchased. Any questions, ask Mindy.

St. Paul's 2004 Plant Sale



It's hard to imagine that we could start thinking about summer flowers already!

You will be getting your plant sale forms soon. All sales will be pre-order. Plants will be picked up the week of Monday, May 3rd - probably on Wednesday of that week – we will let you know, as the date gets closer.

Plants for sale will be annuals, perennials and hanging baskets from Friday's Perennials, the Hot House and Bender's (in Cecil), respectively.

Volunteers are needed to help unload and organize the orders, and for plant pick up. Sign up sheets will be posted outside of each classroom. Anyone helping with unloading or plant delivery may have his or her child stay for lunch bunch at no charge. For questions, please contact anyone from the Plant Sale committee

Becky Brinich – 561-3641

Holly Chamberlain – 531-8732

Catherine Emamzadeh – 531-6269

Mollie Gannon – 561-7528

Karen Martin – 563-7109

Hot Topic



St. Paul's Nursery School is pleased to present a program about the "Spiritual Development of Children" to take place on Thursday, March 25th at 1:00 p.m. in the church lounge. Our guest speaker will be Alice Mahler, LCSW from FamilyLinks. She has been in the mental health and childcare field for over 20 years. She is also the wife of Rabbi Mahler from Temple Emmanuel. Babysitting will be available for \$5.00 per hour per child.



Parent Partnership

Mark your calendars and plan to join fellow parents for an evening Parent Partnership meeting in the Church lounge on Monday, March 15th at 7:30 p.m. We will discuss Mayfair plans, Parent Partnership volunteer opportunities for next year and our new parent mentoring program that we will need volunteers for. Come out for an evening of wine and cheese and help find out about ways to help out and get involved. Please RSVP to Jeannie Barbieri-Low at 412-279-1639. Hope to see you all there!

Lenten Series

Martha Eilertsen will be leading a weekly Lenten meditation in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd on Thursdays from 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Plan to join her for 45 minutes in your day on Thursdays for quiet meditation and prayer time. Each week Martha will be focusing on a meditation concerning children and/or parenting. Plan to join her for a time of quiet reflection in order to care for yourself, your soul, and your spiritual needs.

Parent Burnout

Dereck Jackson gave a wonderful presentation about “Parent Burnout” on February 18th. He was a wonderfully entertaining and informative speaker. He gave us lots of useful information, and often steered us in the direction of asking ourselves whether the “problem” was the child’s or actually more often our own. He encouraged us to all slow our pace down while our children are young and to give ourselves the time to set consistent, yet appropriate limits for young children.



This sounds simple, but in the hustle-bustle competitive world in which we live, it is often hard for us to take the time to limit our own, and our children’s activities in order to do this. Dereck was full of humorous examples and I think everyone left with a lower stress level than when they arrived. He also did a marvelous job of empowering parents to believe that they can be good parents by using common sense and taking time to enjoy their children by respecting each child’s unique personality and style.

Board Of Trustees Nominations

Our nominating committee is currently looking for parents and community members who would be interested in serving on the Nursery School Board of trustees. We are always particularly interested in individuals with backgrounds in finance, law, education, communications, and psychology. If you or anyone you know would be interested please contact Susan Bicket at 412-344-8148 or e-mail her at susan@mosites.net.



Mark Your Calendar For St. Paul's Activities & Events March 2004

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Class Pictures Parent Partnership 7:30	16 Class Pictures	17 	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Hot Topic 1:00 PM Upstairs Lounge 	26	27	28
29	30	31				

