



Parent Post



A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF FOX RIVER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Welcome to the Potlatch Party!

The colorful hats were complete, the Chilkat robes were trimmed, the food was spread, and the games were ready. It was time for the **second grade** Potlatch Party. To celebrate their study of the Tlingit Indians of the Northwest, **Mrs. Leigh** and **Mrs. Wadleigh** planned a Native American Indian feast called a potlatch party. Creatively costumed second graders competed in games of skill, strength, and balance in the Commons. Equally as competitive as their Tlingit counterparts, the students took part in activities that tested their senses and their skills. Some balanced books on their heads, some drew pictures of birds while blindfolded, and some tried to hit targets—all in the spirit of competition. As the party progressed, the students feasted on treats in the classroom, imagining themselves sampling the salmon, elk, or bear that the Tlingit would have eaten. A generous giving of gifts was also a Tlingit custom. The students showered an assortment of gifts on their classmates as part of this celebration.

The second grade classrooms are filled with wonderful projects relating to their study of these Native Americans. A Tlingit village sits in the middle of the room, complete with plank houses, totem poles, and canoes. Books and pictures around the classroom depict the clothing and customs of the different clans. The second graders thoroughly enjoyed their study of the Tlingit Indians. What better way to celebrate this study than a traditional potlatch party? —

Clockwise from top left: Elena Silva, Russel Bergeron, Kathleen Bergeron, and Ben Prigge admire the Indian village; Gabriela Sotomayor models her hat; Sarah MacDonald, Devon Marunde, and Allison Maxfield challenge their senses; Cameron Ragan and Joe Hackl test their skills; Ben Prigge enjoys the party.



From the Head of School



Dear Parents,

For three days this past October, we hosted a team of 12 independent school professionals for our ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States) accreditation visit. The visit followed our institutional self-study, a once-every-seven year process we launched in the late fall of 2004. The self-study, under the guidelines provided by ISACS, occupied members of the faculty and staff, the Board of Trustees, and the Parents Support Association for many months during the first half of 2005. We prepared an extensive report which was used as the measuring stick against which Fox River was evaluated when our ISACS visiting committee arrived.

Our study included a review of our purpose and philosophy, our curriculum, our policies and procedures, our programs, the physical plant, our governance and administration, and our vision for the future. As we undertook this enormous task, we were mindful that it was essential for us to defend the best of what this school has always been while still remaining open to fresh perspective.

While we await final confirmation of our accreditation, let me share with you the major commendations and recommendations of the ISACS visiting team.

The ISACS visiting team commends the FRCDS for its:

1. Nurturing faculty who demonstrate intimate knowledge of their individual students and present a wide variety of teaching styles.
2. Leadership at the Trustee and Head of School level showing vision and a strong teamwork. Bold decisions include a new building, a name change, the encouragement of curricular development, and a reaffirmation of the commitment to the "CBQ's."
3. Commitment to its mission specific character education program. This excellent program is evident in nearly every aspect of the school community.
4. Well maintained, botanically diverse, beautiful grounds and historically significant, architecturally impressive buildings.
5. Creation and implementation of a successful internship program which provides: faculty assistance, additional support to the boarding program, youthful energy, an economical option for meeting a wide variety of personnel needs, and potential faculty members.

The ISACS visiting team recommends that the FRCDS:

1. Marshal all of its resources to market the school effectively, with the goal of increasing enrollment and redoubling its fundraising efforts, to ensure its financial future.

2. Create a comprehensive, well articulated, written curriculum...While we recognize that writing the curriculum is currently in process, we urge the school to publish a complete, comprehensive document.
3. Formally evaluate the entire current communication infrastructure at the school in order to recognize and eliminate communication gaps or misunderstandings that may exist between administrators, faculty and staff, and among academic departments and grade levels.
4. Create and make available to the school community a facilities master plan including the existing physical space and any planned new buildings with specific plans for the intended use of each of these spaces.

The final report contained no surprises to us, but we have been grateful for the strength, clarity, and unity the process, self-study, and final report have provided. As we wrote in the conclusion to our self-study, "Every effort is being made, at every level, to find creative and effective solutions to help establish a stronger root system, design a better "garden," and witness a richer flowering. This broad effort requires enormous love, dedication, patience and understanding by many across all constituencies."

While our most immediate challenge is to be able to balance the school's mission and current programs with the available resources, all evidence suggests that Fox River Country Day School is on the verge of transforming itself into an exemplary pre-secondary independent school.

We are grateful for all of our families who give life to our very purpose.

Warmly, John Friborg 🍁

PSA News

Unveiling Our Future—April 22 at Boulder Ridge Country Club

The Auction Committee would like to extend a HUGE THANK YOU to all the families, trustees and friends who have made a contribution to this year's auction. Whether you bought raffle tickets, made a family donation, sold or purchased an ad in the auction catalog, or made a cash donation, we are grateful for your support. (P.S. Raffle ticket sales and donations can be accepted into April, so don't worry if you missed the February deadline.)


We are off to a great start! Raffle tickets are selling well and class projects are being worked on. We have some new and exciting donations to show off. Invitations will be in the mail in a few weeks.

We hope that all families will mark this date on their calendars and plan to attend this fun event. It's a great way to meet other parents, visit with your child's teacher in a social atmosphere, and be a part of our community. Watch Nuts & Bolts for a weekly Auction Update. 🍁

The final ISACS report is now available for reading. Current parents are invited to read through the report, on site, at their leisure. One copy is available from Mary Fran Doolin and another from Karen Morse.

The Building of Character

The Character Building Qualities form the framework of the morning assemblies at Fox River Country Day School. Each Monday morning faculty members, students, and parents gather in the Commons of the new academic building to consider a new "CBQ" for the week. **Mrs. Myers' fourth grade** participated in an assembly on respect. Each student wrote a paragraph about their concept of this quality and then read these aloud to their fellow students. The following is an excerpt written by **Mason Switzer** from this assembly:

Enjoying the differences among people makes life interesting. If we know about their differences, we will respect everyone. It's important to respect people of all different races, for this will enrich our lives. We should not exclude those who are different, but instead include them in our activities. We should also respect people who have different religions than our own. Teasing or criticizing them is not respectful. Instead, we should find out more about their beliefs. Finally, it's important to respect others no matter what they wear, how they look or what language they speak. Being different is good. Respecting differences among people makes our lives better. 

Encore!

In Susan Wojciechowski's story, *The Talent Show*, the main character is challenged to overcome her worries and stand up to her bossy friend. She finds the courage to perform her special talent and has fun in the process. Fox River **third graders** were inspired while reading this story in their language arts class. In a talent show of their own, **Mrs. Fehlman, Miss Lund,** and their students wowed their audience with a sampling of music, drama, and dance. **Spencer Schael** shared a piano piece that he had learned. **Janiece Levinson** and **Elissa Vrabel** performed a skit to be followed by more action from **Sammy Ray** and **Daniel Groppi**, and some dancing/hair-styling by **Sierra Carr** and **Anoosha Memon**. **Trevor Bushnick** and **Derrick Martinez** showed off their golfing skills as **Scott Marunde** revealed a few secrets for a good game of ping pong. Twisted in half, **Colin Perry** performed an impressive circus stunt, which was the perfect prelude to a choreographed tumbling routine by **Christina Bailey, Jessica Ragan,** and **Kayla Yourek**. Though **Paige Bontkowski** was absent that day, the class recognized her many talents. After **Hannah Demel** revealed her very talented eyebrow and **Steven Van Durme** told a clever joke, Miss Lund shared some tap dancing, and Mrs. Fehlman played a song on the organ. Bravo! Literature has truly come to life in the third grade classroom! 

Clockwise from top left: Scott Marunde gives ping



pong pointers. Janiece Levinson and Elissa Vrabel performing their skit. Spencer Schael at the piano. Sierra Carr and Anoosha Memon create the perfect "do."

Eric

Generous, carefree, silly and honest,

Brother of Sydney,

Lover of the peacefulness of the forest,
the rolling of waves and the laughter
of children,

Who feels excitement in an airplane,
happiness at home and nervousness
with a lot of homework,

Who needs Saturdays, field trips and
vacations,

Who gives presents, laughter and company,

Who fears nothing,

Who would like to see peace in the world,
healthier children and better treatment
of the environment.

Who lives in a gray house on Pimlico
Parkway,

—Faler

*Autobiographical Poem
by Eric Faler, Fourth Grade*





Above: Storyteller Oba William King, visits with first graders after the assembly. Below: A Fox River student admires an African mask.

‘Jambo’ Means Hello



What is the longest river in Africa? What desert covers most of Egypt? What is a favorite sport in Africa that is also played in the United States? These questions

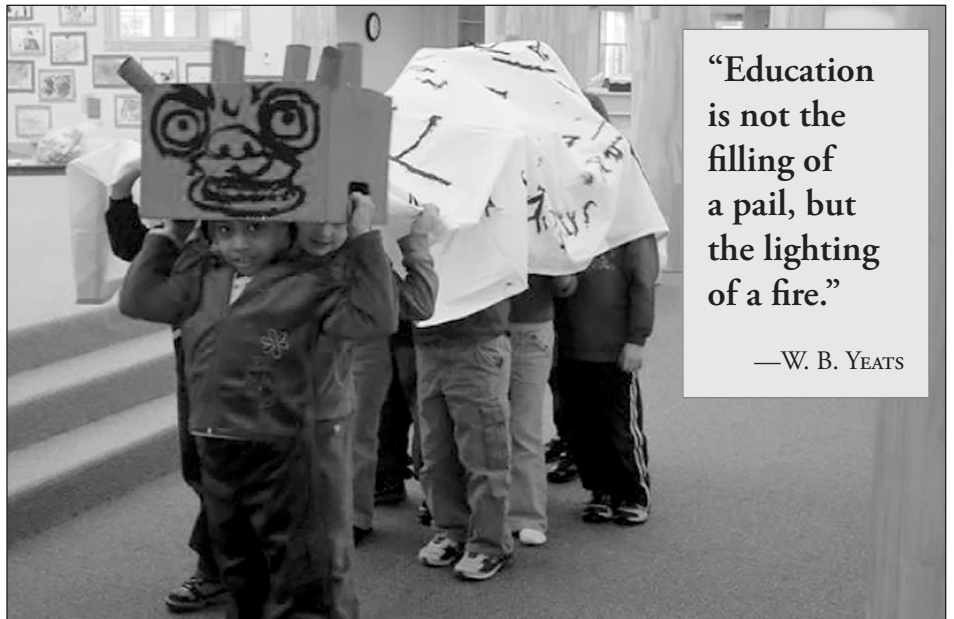
can all be answered in the first grade classroom. **Mrs. Stoka** and her **first graders** have launched into their study of Africa. The children gather daily on their mud cloth or African floor mat to discuss this diverse continent, its people, customs, and animals. The children have been busy making colorful mats to represent kente cloths and creating beautiful tribal masks, which are displayed around the room. Galimoto or toys made of twisted wire decorate the walls and hint at the customs of African children so far away. A highlight for the first grade was a visit from Mr. **Oba William King**, a storyteller, who brought West African traditions to life through his poetry and songs. The first graders are looking forward to their African animal research projects coming up this month and further study of the many countries in Africa. Come and visit the African Museum in Mrs. Stoka’s classroom on February 28 from 3:15-5:00. 🍁



Kindergarten Celebrates Chinese New Year

Fox River **kindergarten** students celebrated the Chinese New Year in style! Their colorful dragon costume, created in an art class, delighted the Lower School students observing the traditional lion parade. The dragon danced its way through the Commons, which was filled with the sights and sounds of the happy celebration. The children sang some favorite songs and enjoyed activities to ring in the New Year of the Dog. A story and treats from China topped off the day.

This event was the culmination of the kindergarten’s in-depth study of China and its culture. The unit included many interesting activities and art projects, which may be seen throughout their classrooms. Colorful, handmade Chinese lanterns hang here and there while a sturdy replica of the Great Wall of China (constructed with blocks) stands in a corner. While learning about the Chinese zodiac, the children found that most of the class was born in the Year of the Dragon or the Year of the Rabbit. The students enjoyed a visit with **Andy Dun**, a current FRCDS eighth grader whose home is in China. Andy talked to the children about the Chinese culture and taught them to write and say “hello.” The kindergarten students have enjoyed their study of China and their celebration of the Chinese New Year. 🍁



“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

—W. B. YEATS

PARENT POST

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