

Parent Post

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



Around the World Auction Kick-Off Celebrates FRCDS Diversity

It's not often that you can sample food from six continents in one night. Traditional fare from 15 countries was abundant at the "Around the World in One Night" international exploration and food tasting event on January 27. Fairy Cakes from Australia, Dolmathes from Greece, Enchiladas from Mexico, Samosas and Pakoras from India, Makayabu from the Congo, Arroz con Leche from Peru, French pastries, Italian Antipasto and many more delicious foods were available to sample.

Parent and teacher volunteers created table displays adorned with International art, flags, instruments and trinkets in Friborg Commons. Colorful posters featuring photos, historical facts and figures galore also awaited students

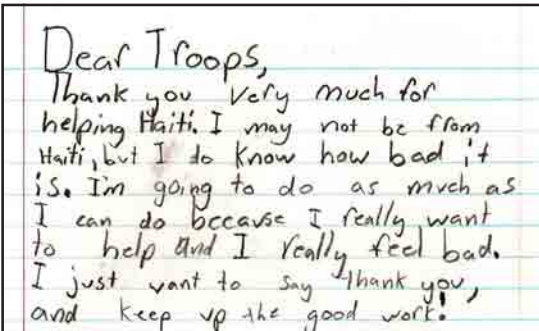
who were given passports and received a stamp at each country they visited. Hundreds of students and family members came to celebrate the diversity at FRCDS and to officially kick off this year's auction, entitled "Around the World in One Night to Benefit the Students of Fox River Country Day School."

FRCDS is like a microcosm of the United States, a melting pot where students from a wide range of ethnicities come together on our beautiful campus to learn from one another and develop their character building qualities, among them cooperation and respect. Whether learning Spanish, writing letters to support Haiti recovery efforts, or learning about holidays around the world, opportunities to improve our under-

standing of diverse cultures create a spirit of tolerance and exploration on our campus.

This successful event was a precursor of what lies ahead for the FRCDS community on Saturday, April 17th when the 18th annual auction sails into the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles. The night will be infused with an international flair and elegance that has yet to be seen at this popular event, including exciting new raffles, international meal selections, and the addition of a World Market Bazaar auction category. *

(Clockwise from top left) Isha Soorya receives a traditional Indian henna from cousin Payal Agrawal; Mary Chung (Mother of Jay Chung); Erica Sevilla with sons Sammy and Ryan, Jasmine and Denise Filawo with Aselo Lopaka; Sophia Archos and Riya Shah with Jami Switzer.



Letters to Haiti

Soon after the earthquake struck Haiti in January, Mrs. Faherty and her fourth grade class discussed the tragic event and shared their reactions to the situation. Teagan Moore commented that her cousin was in the United States Navy and his ship was being sent to Haiti to assist in the relief efforts. The class agreed to write letters to the troops to show their gratitude to the men and women giving their service to this devastated country and to express their compassion for the Haitian victims. Some letters included questions about the soldier's mission; many offered insight to the troops about our CBQ program and suggested that the troops were using charity and cooperation. *

A View From the Wall



The flight was fine. With the good company of the Chinese-American business man sitting next to me and some interested Asian-born listeners seated nearby wanting to know every detail about American education, the 13-hour trip to Shanghai gave me plenty of interesting conversation and went more quickly than I had imagined. I gained a greater appreciation for the many trips that our young FRCDS international boarders make several times each year. The purpose of my trip was to attend boarding school fairs in order to share information about our school as well as to connect with the families of our current Korean and Chinese boarders.

The highlight of my time in Shanghai was spending the day with Ellen Xu, the mother of our eighth grade student, Minnie. Gracious, poised, and generous are words that begin to describe Ellen. As we walked through the contrasting old and new markets of Shanghai and ate pork dumplings together, each hour left me wanting more time with Ellen. Through her interpreter we talked all day. I learned about her vision for her daughter and the unselfish path that enabled her to give up the second decade of parenting that brought Minnie to us. We spoke the language of motherhood that transcends any language barrier. By the end of this memorable day, I had a new friend.

A short hop on the plane to Beijing brought me to another successful school fair where I met families of prospective students. The pleasure of the morning was punctuated by a four-mile afternoon trek to the Forbidden City, the imperial palace that spanned almost five centuries and served as the home of the Emperor and his household that made up the political centre of

Chinese government. I didn't need to go into each of the 900 buildings to be grateful that the oppression in which people lived in and out of these walls has given way to greater individual freedoms.

Sleep didn't come easily that night anticipating the next day's visit to the longest winding serpent of Planet Earth—the Great Wall of China. Although I was bursting with questions, my driver spoke no English and my Mandarin is a bit rusty, making it a long ride together. Finally, the mountains came into view and we arrived at the sweet village of Mutianyu which has been hailed by the Chinese government as a model village because of its rebirth—largely due to tourism and glassware industries. Side street vendors, with three-wheeled carts made the setting complete as they sold fruit, nuts, and kale piled five feet high.

One of the greatest monuments of the world stood before me like a long lost friend frozen in time. In every ordinal direction there were stretches of wall meandering over the mountain peaks. Surrounded by mountains and the embracing warmth of the sun, it wasn't difficult to reflect on the extraordinary privilege of travel. From my perch on a safe embrasure, I cherished the privilege I had to see the world as beautiful, hopeful, and united. The things that bring us together globally are far more significant and lasting than what separates nations and peoples: Universal core values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship, are found across the oceans in every reasonable parent. In Ellen Xu, I saw the desire for the

prosperity of Minnie's character. I hold these values close to my heart for my own children. As parents, our love for our children, and the universal wish to see them prosper in character, not at the expense of others, but in harmony with each other, unites us and makes us each significant builders of something great. My view from the wall wasn't one of mountains and fortresses, but of the expanse of goodness.

One quarter of the population of Korea lives in Seoul, but only a handful were at the empty airport. What followed was four days of multiple examples of caring and generosity from the mothers of Jun, Andrew, Hae Lee, Jia, David, and even the mother of Vicky, one of our esteemed alumni.

The conversations were reserved at first, but as the days unfolded we learned that we have far more in common than we have differences. I was happy to see a friendship developing among these mothers, many of whom were together for the first time. Jun's mom, Lee, was my confident interpreter and helped this lovely group of mothers exchange their hopes and dreams for their children with me. Above all things, we were united in our desire for the development of character in our children.

I am enormously grateful for the privilege of meeting all of these families and for the opportunity to taste the culture in which so many of our students live. My life has been touched by the kindnesses and conversations of these important members of our school family. ❄️

~Karen Morse, Head of School



Top of page: Ellen Xu (Mother of Minnie Shi) and Karen Morse in Shanghai. Above: From left to right; Karen Morse in Korea with Eun Yeoul Lee (Mother of Jun Kwon), Min Jeong Baek (Mother of Andrew Lee), Jun Lee Moon (Mother of HaeLee Jeong), Young Sook seo (Mother of Jia Lee).



Romeo and Juliet Gets Rave Reviews

Hard work and much anticipation from students and Mrs. Faherty paid off. For weeks, the fourth grade students planned and refined their interpretation of Romeo and Juliet.

In class they read *Romeo and Juliet for Kids* by Lois Burdett as part of their study of the Elizabethan Era and Shakespeare. Each student rewrote part of the story in script format to incorporate the language of the times, memorable quotes from Shakespeare, and their own humor. They made paper swords and masquerade masks to use as props.

FRCDS fourth grade class pose for proud parents after the play.

When parents entered the stage area, they found a table displaying student crafted replicas of the Globe Theater and columns decorated with informative posters which highlighted their research of Shakespeare and this famous theater. Students then combined their scripts, assumed the role of one of the characters, and while donning Shakespearean costumes they successfully performed the play according to the stage directions they created. Bowing to a sea of proud parents, all agreed it was a very successful one night only performance! ❄️



First grader, Eva Bowen (above). Sixth grader, Stephanie Lum (right).

¡Hablamos Español!

Señora Asconapé welcomes the first grade class at the door with a cheerful “Buenos Días!” The children remove their coats, shake off the winter chill and are immediately immersed into the sounds of the Spanish language with Señora’s warm voice explaining the instructions for that day’s lesson. “Hoy vamos a hablar sobre la familia!” She reaches into her bag and pulls out two puppets. They represent a mother and child. Two students come forward and with the help and encouragement of Señora Asconapé they give a little puppet show in Spanish for the rest of the class. Next, the class learns about the names of each member of the family from Abuela (Grandmother) to Padre (Father) continuing to dog (perro) and cat (el gato)! Later that afternoon in the computer lab, Señora Asconapé watches over the sixth grade class as they work

International Students Enrich Our Community

Our Fox River community is very diverse, representing families from across the globe. The opportunity to include students, whose families currently live in China and South Korea, enlarges our sense of being world citizens.

Middle school teacher, Miss Love has noticed that her “domestic students are always eager to try new foods brought in from their international classmates. They enjoy sharing popular music from the various countries. The cultural exchanges clearly benefit all the students.”

When asked, “What is the best thing about attending school in the United States?” eighth grader, HaeLee Jeong replied, “The best thing is learning English everyday and that it is really friendly here. It feels like family.” ❄️



International boarding students (front row left to right); Jia Lee, Ellen Zhang, and HaeLee Jeong (back row left to right) Andrew Lee, David Oh, Jun Kwon, and Minnie Shi.

on a Power Point presentation written in Spanish about Puerto Rico. Within the presentation there are several aspects of Puerto Rico that they must address including comidas (food), la bandera (the flag) and el clima (the climate) to name a few. The value of these early learning experiences will be evident to FRCDS graduates as they enter high school with a solid knowledge of Spanish I, ready for Spanish II. ❄️



CBQ's In Action



(Clockwise from top left) Jessica Sloat gives a warm blanket to a resident of Elgin on behalf of the FRCDS Girl Scout troop. Destiny Barfield, Hannah Demmel and Malik Pauldon collect warm weather clothing for the Elgin Community Crisis Center, collected as a result of the FRCDS coat drive in December. Reena Murphy, Jacob Narayan and Darshan Addanki deliver food to the FISH Food Pantry of Carpentersville.

Is Fox River Country Day School a National School of Character?

In December, our faculty and staff began a campaign to assess our school's character education program as it relates to the 11 principles of character education established by the Character Education Partnership (CEP)

In 2001, the Japhet School in Michigan was recognized as a National School of Character, as was Milwaukee College Prep, in 2009. We have opened a dialogue with both schools who have expressed their willingness to share ideas and advice as we go forward with this project. While there are grants awarded to winners, we are undergoing this process to ensure our programs are most effectively designed to develop ethical students capable of making difficult choices.

We are organized into four teams:

1- Self-Assessment: will complete a thorough analysis of our school using the 11 Principles of Character Education. This is our "what can be improved" team.

2- Strategic Planning: will set guidelines for improvement. This is our "how do we fix it" team.

3- Core Values Search: will complete a core values reasoning seminar, evaluate our current CBQs, and make changes if needed. This is our largest team consisting of faculty, staff, middle-school students, future employers, and especially parents. Our CBQs are derived from core values that are the basic building blocks of character.

4- Writing: will compile information from the other teams, document our programs, and complete our application.

While our character education program has a long history and is proven to be effective, we want to ensure it is the very best possible program we can provide and are, therefore asking ourselves: Is it intrinsic? Are we aware of our values? Do we have the moral courage to apply them to a broad spectrum of people and in all situations, or just when someone is watching? Character and character education require discipline, vigilance, and consistency. Our advancing technology will place greater demands upon character. Should we clone our best teachers? Will our students

someday succumb to corruption in order to gain power? Will they cheat or plagiarize in order to pass a class? If I have learned anything from all the case studies in school, it's that the unethical do not survive. Our responsibility to parents, students, and society dictates that we must put character first.

See the CEP website: <http://www.character.org/elevenprinciples> for more information on criteria.

We welcome your input. If you have questions or wish to participate as a team member, please contact:

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Art with Wings

FRCDS third graders are delighted to share their works of art for a reason; these ceramic butterflies, created in art class, will be donated to a good cause. "Zikaron V'Tikah (Remembrance and Hope) is an artistic and educational project serving as a powerful visual representation to remember the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust and to honor those who survived" states the project coordinator at San Diego Jewish Academy. Handmade butterflies

collected from around the world are being displayed on the walls of the school to "remember the past, act responsibly in the present and create a peaceful future". Thousands of butterflies from schools, youth groups and community service clubs have been received; 100 of them are from Holocaust survivors themselves. Soon, the butterflies from Fox River Country Day School will fly among them! ❄️



Third graders from both classes show their beautiful butterflies to be displayed in honor of Holocaust victims and survivors.

Simple Machines Lighten the Load

How different would your life be without the invention of the wheel?

Second graders studying a unit on simple machines have had a chance to reflect on how simple machines have changed the way we live and work. The scientific definition of work is the effort it takes to move something. Students learned that machines are devices that makes work easier and simple machines, in particular, allow people to use a small amount of force to move large loads. Five simple machines have played a key role in the development of modern technology: the inclined plane, the wheel and axle, the screw, the lever and the pulley.

As the students learn more about simple machines, they are given the opportunity to discover hands-on the answers to questions such as at which angle it is easiest to move a load up an inclined plane and how rough and smooth surfaces affect the movement of loads. They will experiment with fixed pulleys as well as moveable pulleys, and much more! ❄️



Advait Deoskar gets some hands on time with one of the simple machines discussed in class.



Remembering the Holocaust

"The worst of it was the transports. If your name was not on the list on Tuesday, it was a good day." One did not want to be put on the train with the other 1200 passengers headed to a camp that was even worse than Bergen Belsen.

On January 29th, middle school students were privileged to hear a presentation from a Holocaust survivor. George Mueller Levy spent two years with his sister Ursula in concentration camps during World War II. He was 13, she was 8. They witnessed beatings, walked over those who did not survive, were covered with lice, and shared watery broth and small portions of bread for those two years. They saw themselves grow weak and far too thin but, were eventually set free by Russians at the end of a long, crowded train ride.

Mr. Mueller, author of *Lucie's Hope*, answered questions from the students. ❄️

Malik Pauldon looks at a picture George Mueller Levy, author and Holocaust survivor, taken with his family before the devastating event changed their lives.

Let it Snow! A Winter Wonderland for Fox River Students

Nothing delights young children as much as catching snowflakes on the tip of their tongues, playing in freshly fallen powdered snow, building snowmen and sledding.

At FRCDS, the campus becomes a winter wonderland of opportunities to learn about snow and the habits of forest inhabitants during the winter. Students also delight in their own “hands-on” experimentation with the properties of snow as they propel themselves on sleds down the snow-covered hills of the wooded campus.

Ms. Betts’ 3-year-old preschool class took a deep dive into snow in January and learned all about the properties of the white stuff. Preschoolers learned why they really shouldn’t put snow in their mouths—when they brought snow inside to watch it melt, they could see the dirt that fell to the bottom of the pan, not as pure as it once appeared. The class made some artificial snow then donned their winter gear and headed outdoors to build a snowman together.

For environmental education, Mr. Holzworth talked to the class about finding animal tracks in the snow. The students later made their own snow prints by painting their own hand and foot tracks on long paper strip of “snow.” ❄️



(Clockwise from top left) Kindergarten students Isha Soorya and Jamie Koo sled through the snowflakes. Hailey Vogt, Abhay Gondesi and Rahul Gowda inspect snow close up. Miss Carol’s class gathers around their “cool” snowman.

Westward Bound: Exploring the Oregon Trail



(Front row) Jay Chung and T.J. Reed. (Back row) Sammie Geenen and Sophia Archos.

Fifth grade social studies students recently studied Native American life, the Lewis & Clark Expedition and the Westward Expansion in the 1800s, which had a considerable impact on the growth of our young nation. Mrs. Loewe covered an important part of the expansion that occurred during the late 1840’s when thousands of settlers set off on “the great migration” traveling the Oregon Trail in search of new land. More than a half million people would travel the Oregon Trail in covered wagons before the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.

Dividing into two teams, they devised plans to build a solid structure that would support cardboard wheels and a drop cloth wagon cover. Students had to consider carefully what supplies would be required for their survival, including food, weapons and health products. The students completed the project successfully and were proud of the work they completed, and had a new respect for the sacrifices made by the early settlers. ❄️

Getting to Know You

New faculty and staff were asked...



What about FRCDS most appealed to you when you accepted your position?

I loved the idea of working for a school that believes in educating the “whole child” rather than strictly academics. Also, as a music student, I was impressed with the scope of the spring production. Incorporating eight grades worth of students into one show is something I am excited to witness and be a part of!

~Christa Sied-Graham, Assistant PS Teacher



Do you have a favorite hobby?

My favorite hobby, since I was 14 years old, is building and flying radio controlled model airplanes.

What would the students be surprised to know about you?

In the summer and on weekends during the school year I operate a small landscaping business.

~Ryan Wlodek, MS Science Teacher

FRCDS Girls Inspired by Teen Author

On a November afternoon, the 5th-8th grade girls participated in a forum with Carrie Silverstock, author of *Secrets Girls Keep* and founder of www.girlswithdreams.com. All the girls gathered on the couches of the Alumni Room to share a conversation with Carrie about beauty, friends/peer pressure, and school. She advised the girls to pay attention to their strengths and find activities in which to get involved that will boost confidence; that their worth is not dependent on how many boys like them. She gave them some tips on how to feel more confident around boys. Carrie suggested that the

girls choose friends that are positive, happy and supportive. She spoke about family and how important it is to have good, open communication. After answering a few more questions, she reminded the girls to respect each other and themselves, to compliment others, to write down things they want to keep as promises to themselves, and to dream big!

As an extension to the forum, the Middle School girls took part in Carrie’s World Wide Slumber Party that Saturday night. Girls across the country celebrated being strong and confident. ❄️



Middle School girls gather around author Carrie Silverstock.

Every Gift Counts

Did you know?

- Tuition only covers 65% of the school’s annual operating expenses.
- The actual cost to the school of educating each child at FRCDS is almost \$16,000.
- The Annual Fund is crucial to covering expenses incurred this school year.
- The Board of Trustees has an additional significant goal beyond that of the Development Office.
- Faculty and staff earning more than \$30,000 all took salary cuts to avoid cutting programs.
- Participation matters! Foundations determine their willingness to give to organizations based upon their community’s level of support. Even small gifts of \$25 or \$50 count toward our parent participation numbers and help us to attract grants from other foundations.
- A \$50 gift to the school pays for 11 hours of electricity.
- A \$100 gift to the school pays for 3 text books; 5 consumable workbooks.
- A \$500 gift to the school pays for two teachers

- to attend a professional development conference that directly and immediately impacts instructional knowledge.
- A \$1,000 gift to the school pays for 28 hours of mortgage on the Neil Building.
- \$2,500 donation = operation of Music and Arts programs for 5 days.
- A \$5,000 gift pays for operation of the pool and gym for 2 weeks.
- Gifts can be made by check, credit card, or direct debit. You may also make a gift online on our web site.

Parents attending the January PSA meeting heard and exchanged ideas and thoughts about this most important community effort. The need is especially great now! Please make your gift today! Contact Jami Switzer at jswitzer@frcds.org or give her a call at 847.888.7910, ext. 126 for more information.

Remember, Every Gift Counts! ❄️

Athletic Grant Activates Students

In the past 20 years, the obesity rate in the United States has doubled. According to a publication titled "Trust for America's Health," Illinois is the 25th most obese state in the country. What is being done locally to combat the obesity epidemic which has reached a record high? A few months ago, Fox River was introduced to Activate Elgin, a city-wide initiative to engage the community to work together in harmony providing all residents with opportunities to improve their health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

Maura Knight and Carolyn Mahler, Fox River parents, along with some faculty and staff worked together to apply for a grant from Activate Elgin in order to improve the status of our athletic equipment inventory used for daily P.E. classes as well as the



Middle School Athletics program. Recently, we were awarded that \$1000 grant which allowed FR to purchase new balls for basketball, soccer, dodge ball and volleyball to name a few. This equipment has already made a huge difference. Lower school children are enjoying the feeling of bouncing new, brightly colored balls for fun and organized play in the gym.

Kyle Monestero, Athletic Director, indicated that our Middle School athletes have a new sense of pride that has resulted in a positive effect on the playing field and basketball court. They can take that sense of pride and play with even more enthusiasm and confidence. GO HAWKS! ❄️

Second graders (above) display colorful dodgeballs and Mrs. Rasmussen's kindergarten students have fun with basketballs (left); all purchased as a result of the Activate Elgin grant.

Cheering On the Hawks!



(Above) Hannah Demel jumps for the basket. (Left) David Oh shoots for the hoop while Colin Perry gets prepares for the rebound. (Top right) Lower school girls Pom squad entertained the audience and players at recent basketball games during halftime. (Front row) Sarah Reitmeister, Gigi Sarnello and Hannah Switzer. (Middle row) Emma Maria Saenz, Mandy Reitmeister and Paulina Clapp. (Back row) Teagan Moore, Meredith Greene, Assistant Libby Guerrero and Coach Sarah Faherty



PARENT POST

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The mission of the Fox River Country Day School is to educate the whole child through values-based curriculum conducted in a homelike environment, combining academic excellence with individual character development.



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