



# The Howler

Tracking the Pack...



Volume 5 Issue 6

## Update from The Leader of the Pack...

February 2016



*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy,  
they are the charming gardeners  
who make our souls blossom.*

*~Marcel Proust*



Happy February, Everyone! So much is going on at Redwood Prep right now that it is hard to fit everything in our newsletter! Academically, students are working through engineering challenges with Project Lead the Way activities; researching important historical events and activities in preparation for the Humboldt County History Day at HSU; beginning to work on ideas for Science Fair projects; and practicing tricky spelling words in preparation for the Eel River Valley and Humboldt County Spelling Bee. Creatively, students are practicing their roles for upcoming classroom plays; spending extra time working in band for the upcoming honor band activities; and working and learning about the style and history of Paul Cezanne in our Meet the Masters program. Physically, students are making the most of the sunny days that we have right now to be outside and active. Basketball is still in full swing and the cheerleaders are entertaining us with some great routines and cheers!

Parents and RPrep staff members are working just as hard! We want to thank all of the families that came out to help us remove brush, debris, and trees earlier this year to prep our new site for upcoming construction. Families also gave up weekend time to come out to help us prep the inside of the existing building for remodeling. So much help has saved us thousands and thousands of dollars that can be used toward playground equipment and structures and other great things for our kids. If you haven't had an opportunity to join us in building the future for our children, there will be more activities coming up when we work on the landscaping projects later in the spring.

Right now, most of our classroom sections are here. We are just waiting on the weather to give us enough of a break to dig the foundations. Once the foundations are ready, the modular units will go up very quickly. The staff is excited about working in larger classrooms with more options for arranging learning environments. The engineers are wrapping up the plans for the existing building, and we will put out our request for proposals on the remodel project very soon. At this point, we are about one week behind schedule but still on track for moving in by mid-summer.

In addition to every day school activities and our construction project, the staff is meeting with interested families through our annual enrollment process to provide information about our school. There are two more meetings planned for this month prior to the enrollment lottery. If you know an interested family that would like to participate in the enrollment lottery, please share the dates of the informational meetings— February 25th and 29th at 6:00 at the Ross Hill site. The enrollment lottery will take place on March 4th at 4:00.

Have a happy February! Happy Valentines Day! Happy Presidents' Week! Happy Super Bowl!



*All you need is love, but  
A little chocolate every now and then doesn't hurt...*  
*~ Charles Shultz*



**Transitional Kindergarten—Faith Gittins [fgittins@redwoodprep.org](mailto:fgittins@redwoodprep.org)**

As January wraps up so does my first month of teaching our amazing TK class. We have had so much fun working together and getting to know each other. There is SO much love within these kiddos! I am so grateful for all of the hugs and cuddles I get throughout the day. They're the best! Throughout January we have been exploring the winter season, making snowflakes and fake snow to play with. We've learned about animals that live in the snow, made polar bear masks, and experimented with blubber to see how animals stay warm in the cold. We even recycled water

bottles into penguins! Their favorite part was playing super hero penguins with them afterwards. It amazes me how much these little ones grow and how quickly. Many of them are beginning to read short stories and even writing the sounds they hear in words. They love to learn and to be challenged with games and puzzles. We finished last week with an exciting field trip to the Humboldt County Library and to the Discovery Museum. I always look forward to being with this loving group of kids and each of them has quickly claimed a special space in my heart, just in time for Valentine's Day!

**Kindergarten - Krista Croteau [kcroteau@redwoodprep.org](mailto:kcroteau@redwoodprep.org)**

As a school, we believe in developing our students' intrinsic motivation. We have passed the halfway mark in this school year and I've been reflecting on where my students' skills rest, both academically and social/emotionally. I want them to be prepared for the challenges that face them in the next grade and I want them to continue their growth as people who are intrinsically motivated to do what is right. Ensuring their academic success is, in some ways, easier than the emotional. There are so many different factors that influence whether

students will make the best choices in the right moment. How do you stack the odds in their favor? Research says through choice, relationship and respect.

The following is from the article, *How and Why Intrinsic Motivation Works*, by Maurice Ellis of Rutgers University, which appeared on the Edutopia website on January 14, 2016.

We are more aware than ever that student motivation and engagement is essential for lasting learning. But there is less discussion of how and why intrinsic motivation works. In fact, when we talk about "motivating students," we lose sight of the fact that they are already motivated ~ just often not to do what educators want them to do! That's why understanding intrinsic motivation is so important. We need to work with students' motivational systems more than impose motivation from the outside (i.e. extrinsically).

**Deci and Ryan on Intrinsic Motivation:** There is an intrinsic need for personal autonomy, self-determination, and to feel that one is choosing one's behavior, vs. being controlled externally. The work of Edward Deci and William Ryan, *Why We Do What We Do: Understanding Self-Motivation*, has been the exemplar in elaborating on the importance of what has come to be called "intrinsic motivation."

Choice is an essential element in feeling a sense of control. But when choices are offered, individuals need to have the information necessary for making a meaningful decision, not simply choosing between unclear options. Children also don't benefit much from choice when there likely are constraints after a choice is made. Notice the difference between #1 and 2, and #3 and 4. *Continued next page...*

1. What kind of book would you like to read?
2. What would you like to do at recess?
3. Do you want to focus on the Battle of Vicksburg or what happened at Antietam?
4. Do you want to show what you learned by writing an essay, writing out an interview script, or writing the script for a video documentary?

To generate more visible enthusiasm, as well as compliance under less monitoring, try to give instructions in autonomy-supportive ways, vs. conventional, controlling ways. Example: Cleanup by young children after an art project:

- \* Controlling: "Keep the materials neat; don't mix up the colors; don't get any paint on the floor; be sure your smocks stay on."
- \* Supportive: "I know sometimes it's fun to slop the paint around, but we need to keep the materials and the room nice for the other children who will use them."

This, of course, may seem familiar as Diana Baumrind's empirically supported "authoritative" approach to parents speaking with children. That approach includes a rationale they can understand for why a limit is being set.

**Giving Corrective Feedback: It's All in How It's Done**

For those who believe that intrinsic motivation is incompatible with negative feedback, and will ignore poor performance, the answer is that it's all in how it is done. The operative concept is constructive feedback.

The basic approach is to respect the child's dignity and competence. First, ask students to reflect on their own performance, what they did in a particular situation, how they approached a test, etc. That authentic conversation, where there is a trusting environment, will often lead to an understanding of the problem that can then be supported or refined as needed. Next, follow with the open-ended question: What can you/we do next time so that this will not happen the same way again? Giving students the first pass at corrective action deeply respects dignity and competence, and does not prevent friendly and constructive adult amendment of the student's plans, along with a check-in for accountability.

**Keep Experimenting**

If the open-ended question does not work, the next approach is to give some choices about what the student thinks might have been going on. That also respects dignity and also the possibility that students are not used to being asked to self-evaluate or do not trust the open-ended approach. Those choices can be followed by the statement, "Or, do you think there is something else going on?" If neither of these work, feedback can be provided in an electronic message format. Often, I have found it useful to say, "Well, I would like you to think more about what we have discussed, and we will meet to talk more about it later/tomorrow/another time period as appropriate." But if this does not work, then the e-message is, "It looks to me as if x, y, z happened. When that happens, there are a, b, c consequences for you and others. What do you think? Am I understanding this correctly?"

The commitment to preserve the child's dignity and turn negative feedback situations into constructive feedback situations comes from the belief that it is a developmental right and necessity to nurture at least some areas of children's competence and possibility. This is beyond the task of each individual teacher to accomplish effectively in isolation. Have conversations with your colleagues about each individual student's "day at school," and help each student have an affirming experience in school each day; this is no less important in grade 12 than it is at pre-K, or any time in between.

**1st Grade—Dawn Carroll [dcarroll@redwoodprep.org](mailto:dcarroll@redwoodprep.org)**

First graders recently completed an exciting STEM challenge. They used the available materials (straws, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks, cardboard, foam sheets, fabric, cotton, rubber bands and glue gun) to create a sturdy and comfortable chair for Goldilocks. The chair had to hold the Goldilocks doll for a minimum of 30 seconds. They were very creative and persevered through design challenges.



**3rd Grade - Morgan Drake [mdrake@redwoodprep.org](mailto:mdrake@redwoodprep.org)**

What a difference a few grades make! With Mrs. Kendall going on maternity leave, I have departed from TK and joined the third grade. Fortunately, this has been a fairly smooth transition. We have already done some fun projects that have turned the kids into engineers, as well as encouraged them to think outside of the box. One such project we did was making spaghetti and marshmallow towers and bridges. This was a sticky situation, but the kids did a wonderful job working together, creating designs and bringing their designs to life. The kids also worked on a color challenge.

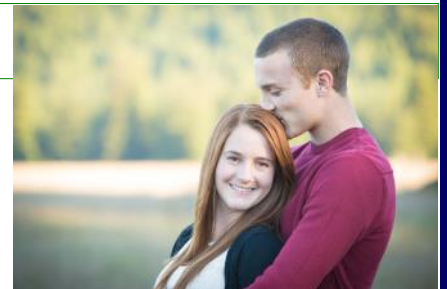
Working in teams they were assigned a color and had to come up with a way to describe their color to a blind person (thanks mom); who then attempted to guess each team's color. They did an amazing job considering the other senses and appealing to those senses. We had teams bring in food, items to smell and feel and even music to listen to. Four of the seven colors were guessed correctly. We have also started Project Lead the Way: Science of Flight. I am so impressed with how well these kids are grasping the concepts of flight and I am looking forward to seeing how they will grow as engineers throughout this program. We are off to a great start and I am very excited to continue working with this great group of kids.

**4th Grade— Amy Eastman [aeastman@redwoodprep.org](mailto:aeastman@redwoodprep.org)**

Hope you are all staying dry during this much-needed rainy season! 4<sup>th</sup> grade has been working hard on several different projects! We have been reading “Hatchet” in literature circles and loving the adventure in that story. We have been working on our animal reports and our Native American photobook project in social studies. Each student is studying a different Native American tribe from California and creating a photobook explaining all different parts of life in that tribe. Their creativity and attention to detail has been so fun to see! We are also excited about starting our science fair projects! We are also working on 2-digit by 2-digit multiplication, kicking our math skills up a notch! We were so excited to go 1:1 with a Chromebook for every 4<sup>th</sup> grader earlier this month! Looking forward to another wonderful month in room 4!

**5th Grade - Miranda Head [mhead@redwoodprep.org](mailto:mhead@redwoodprep.org)**

So much fun with PLTW: Robotics in 5th grade!!!



*“The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.” ~ Abraham Lincoln*



### 6th Grade - Melanie Downing [m Downing@redwoodprep.org](mailto:m Downing@redwoodprep.org)

The Middle School Teachers were recently delivered a fancy-looking, hand-made envelope over lunch. Inside was a card that stated, “90/93 students at Redwood Prep have signed this petition. Democracy? You decide.” The attached letter made a case for disbanding the bi-monthly mile. I couldn’t help but grin – I love that our kids feel a sense of ownership over “running” our school. Empowering students is key to building community, and though it sometimes creates extra work for us, our crew of pre-teens know how to use their voice.

We understand that a strong sense of community leads to higher level of academic motivation and a decreased amount of behavior problems. Additionally, research supports the idea that students are more likely to act altruistically and develop emotional competencies if part of a healthy school community. Educational Leadership featured an article that outlined four particularly beneficial approaches to strengthening students’ sense of community.

*Actively cultivate respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents.* Supportive relationships are the heart of community. They enable students from diverse backgrounds to bring their personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences into the classroom. Supportive relationships help parents, especially those who would otherwise feel vulnerable or uncomfortable, take active roles in the school and in their children's education.

*Emphasize common purposes and ideals.* Along with academic achievement, schools with a strong sense of community stress the development of qualities essential to good character and citizenship, such as fairness, concern for others, and personal responsibility. Everyone shares an understanding of the school's values, which then shape daily interactions.

*Provide regular opportunities for service and cooperation.* Students learn the skills of collaboration, develop wider and richer relationships, and experience the many satisfactions of contributing to the welfare of others.

*Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence.* Having a say in establishing the agenda and climate for the classroom is intrinsically satisfying and helps prepare students for the complexities of citizenship in a democracy.

So, where does that leave us and the situation with the unpopular bi-monthly mile? The teachers are creating a counter-proposal; if the student body agrees to be positive, respectful, and engaged during all P.E. activities, we’ll reduce the mile to once per month. Definitely has the ring of a democracy.



### Music– Jill Petricca [jpetricca@redwoodprep.org](mailto:jpetricca@redwoodprep.org)

The year is off to a fantastic start for everyone I hope. Students are singing, tongue twisting in time, leading echo songs, listening to classics and making our way outside to perform dance steps. The next two months are ripe with the planning of a May Day celebration by and for the students of our school. If you have a heart to assist this student inspired, tradition building, and memory making event, please contact me. Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. your family can experience the **Southern Humboldt Honor Band concert** at the FUHS Little Theater. Four of our students will be performing in a concert band alongside other students in the region up through high school age.

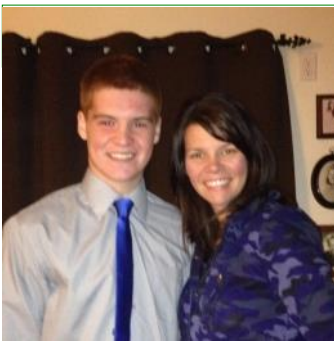


### 7th Grade - Katie Dore [kdore@redwoodprep.org](mailto:kdore@redwoodprep.org)

Lots of fascinating things have been happening in Math and Science! With our study of human body systems and the Mammalian eye, seventh graders have recently dissected a cow's eye! This day is one of my favorites each year as the students get to interact with the structures of an eye and actually "see" them instead of merely looking at a diagram or reading vocabulary. Hearing them talk to each other using academic language during the dissection is so rewarding! Also in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, we will be attending the "I've been admitted to college" field trip to College of the Redwoods through the

Decade of Difference program. They will see a presentation, get a tour of the campus and will also attend a college class taught by a teacher from CR.

Math Club is also in full swing! Several 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Redwood Prep will also have the opportunity to participate in The Math Counts competition February 24<sup>th</sup> at Sunny Brae Middle School.



### 8th grade - Janice Lourenzo [jlourenzo@redwoodprep.org](mailto:jlourenzo@redwoodprep.org)

Community service is more than logging hours... After reading a recent article in [The Washington Post](#), I reflected on the Redwood Prep community service requirement for 8th grade students. The article describes a shift in college admissions. Schools are seeking out students that are "more humane, [and] less super-human." According to Jeremiah Quinlan, dean of undergraduate admissions at Yale University, they want students that demonstrate "authentic intellectual engagement and a concern for others and the common good" in addition to exemplary academic achievement. What that means...

Community service and activity rap sheets that are a mile long won't cut it if they are just a list of disconnected events. That's not what stands out when admissions gurus are combing through thousands of applications.

How does this relate to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade teens at RPC?! When approaching the community service requirement, don't just log 10 random hours of community service, check the box and move on. Instead students should find ways to serve the community while having fun and exploring activities that ignite their passion. Bottom line- community service should not be grueling. It is a time for students to look at their strengths and hobbies, and with that knowledge, find their niche for serving the community. Let's go beyond logging the hours and help RPC students find activities that build upon their strengths!

### Art/Technology- Sharn Chinnici [schinnici@redwoodprep.org](mailto:schinnici@redwoodprep.org)

With our Meet the Masters program, every class has just completed a lesson on Paul Cezanne. The students learned about his unique style of creating still life art and completed a piece of art inspired by his works. The TK and Kindergarten classes are participating in the program as well and are making some awesome pieces of work. The upper grades are moving on to another famous Paul, this time Klee. They will be starting an art piece where he used bold black lines to convey a message of bitter sweet. It will be interesting to see what kind of art they produce.



# February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Family Events Mtg. @ 5:15	4	5	6
7 Hunt for the Golden Horse Shoe Race	8	9	10	11 DIBI Board Mtg. @ 6:00 p.m.	12 Early Release Day—12:00	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Presidents' Week Break — No School						
21	22	23	24	25 Enrollment Mtg. @ 6:00 p.m.	26	27 History Day at HSU
28	29 Enrollment Mtg. @ 6:00 p.m.					

## February Events

- 3rd— Family Events Mtg. @ 5:15
- 11th — DIBI Board Mtg. @ 6:00
- 12th — Early Release Day @ 12:00
- 15th—19th — Presidents' Week No School
- 25th — Enrollment Information Mtg. @ 6:00
- 27th—History Day at HSU
- 29th — Enrollment Information Mtg. @ 6:00



- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Copy paper
- Clorox or Lysol Wipes
- Large Garbage Bags (30 Gallon)
- Kitchen Garbage Bags
- Ziploc Storage Bags



## RPrep Volunteer Opportunities for February

- ✎ Yard Maintenance
- ✎ Valentines Day Activities
- ✎ After School Drivers from South School Campus to Ross Hill Campus



*“A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?”*

*~ George Washington*