

What's Brewing

Fall 2009:
Volume 6, Issue 2

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A Message from Our Head of School



**Donna
Kennedy**

"Transitions and Change"

I recently returned from a Conference for Independent Heads of Schools at Mohonk Mountain House. If you have never been to Mohonk, it is certainly worth the trip.

One of the most inspiring parts of the conference was the discussion by a panel of Heads about transitions which they had gone through. All of us try our best to prepare for, cope with and manage transitions based on what we know and what we think may or may not happen.

As I was listening to the diverse panel of experienced and new Heads, I reflected on the many transitions I have had in my life at Gillen Brewer. Each and every one was a challenge in the short term, but without exception each and every one was necessary for my growth and the growth of the school.

I often talk about the opportunities for learning and sometimes when I am in the middle of a difficult transition, I pause and ask myself, "Now, what am I supposed to be learning here?" As with all transitions, time and patience are our biggest allies. In the long run, change is good. The panel discussion once again reminded me of this.

As one of my favorite notes on my bulletin board states, *if there were no change, we wouldn't have butterflies*; equally true is that if there were no change, there would be no opportunity for learning. And learning is why we are all here at Gillen Brewer.

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Note from the Parents' Association Co-Chairs

Greetings parents, caregivers and the Gillen Brewer community!

We want to introduce ourselves as the new Gillen Brewer Parents' Association Co-Chairs. We are Fern Robles (left, Mom of Jacob and Joshua) and Marlea Bookstein (right, Mom of Satchel). Our first order of business is a big shout out to our predecessors, Alison De Noia and Graciela Meltzer for their dedication and service. We thank you!



A copy of the Gillen Brewer Parents' Association Handbook was sent home in your child's backpack earlier this fall and it is your resource for everything PA. It explains the roles of the PA, Co-Chairs and Class Representatives, and it outlines the events we have planned for this school year. There is also a schedule of PA Class Rep Meetings and we invite you to call in if you can't attend. As we are all members of the Parents' Association, we welcome your participation and feedback.

Autumn is a busy time at Gillen Brewer. There are exciting events such as Grandparents' Day, Fall Family Fun Day and Thanksgiving Feast, in addition to the beginning of our Annual Appeal. Fundraising is our biggest initiative for the school and the Annual Appeal is an important component. The funds we raise allow the school to maintain the fabulous programs our kids love – art, music, sports, science and technology. Every year our goal is 100% participation and we anticipate reaching that goal! Soon you will begin to hear rumblings about our Annual Spring Benefit Auction. Last year's Auction was a resounding success! It was wonderful to watch our community come together to raise over \$295,000 for our kids. This year we hope to match—even exceed—the prior year's results, and with your help we intend to rise to the challenge.

Thank you to the volunteers, donors and participants for all our events – none of this is possible without you! We need the continued support of our parent body and look forward to working with you all to make this another fantastic year for Gillen Brewer!

Please go to www.gillenbrewer.com for more information on our events!

Mark Your Calendars!

December 2	Staff Development—Noon Dismissal
December 7-18	Parent Conferences
December 24-January 1	Holiday Break—School Closed
January 4	School Resumes
January 15	Staff Development—No School
January 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—School Closed
February 10	Staff Development—Noon Dismissal
February 12	Bus Driver/Matron Appreciation Day
February 15-19	Winter Break—School Closed
February 22	School Resumes



Correction: Our apologies to GBS parents Anne Edelson and Jonathan Tobias, who were left off the list of donors by class in the 2008-2009 annual report.

Alumni News

Happy alumni wrote to us about their current schools:

Matthew:

The Community School is going great. I love fifth grade. I hope Gillen Brewer is going well too. I finished my first week of school. I have to switch classes for periods. I do this by myself. I walk down the halls and up and down the stairs. This is not scary. It's a piece of cake. I am making new friends and encountering old ones too! I miss you all very much and I would like to come and visit soon.

Lucia:

Something has been different in our new school. Today we had fun. We were going to go on a trip today, but instead we planted seeds, did knitting and drawing.

Joseph:

I will be there for the Fall Family Fun Day and I look forward to seeing you. I really like my new school. I wasn't really scared starting school this September because I went to the school for two weeks in the summer time. I was a little nervous when I started then but some of my friends from Gillen Brewer were there and I made some new friends so after the first day I felt a little better. I miss Gillen Brewer and look forward to visiting the school when I am able. What is great about my new school is that we have our own lockers and all of our subjects are not held in one class. We have our gym that has a full size basketball court. It actually has two courts. I plan on joining the soccer team and drum rehearsals. So far my teachers are nice. My school is on Roosevelt Island. The school bus has to go over a small bridge just to get to the island. The ride is around 45 minutes because we have to pick up other kids.

Hudson:

So far the school has been going great! I have a bunch of new teachers and classmates. Matthew B. and Max S. are even in my homeroom. I also have math and physical education with Sammy. My homeroom teachers' names are Mrs. Finkel and Mrs. Luna. They are both very nice. I have lots of new periods and specials, which is different than Gillen Brewer. I hope you have a great time this year at Gillen Brewer. I wish you the best of luck. Please say hi to everyone from Hudson.

Ethan:

My school is kind of fun because my teacher only does teach basic facts in second grade. The hardest she taught us was $8+5$. That's so easy. It is 13! I got the answer in a second sharp! My favorite thing about my teacher is that she helped the room moms plan the Halloween party. It was very fun but I can't explain why. My favorite thing about Farmington is that we can borrow video games there.



Alumna Isabella visits with Jonathan, Christian and Sarah in the summer

Grandparents' Corner

October brought Grandparents' Day, with over 75 guests visiting the school on the 23rd. Adults and children alike were all smiles and had a fabulous day.



Troy with his grandmother



Wayman with his grandmother

A Day with Michael Thompson

Fourth Annual Ladies' Luncheon: "The Pressured Child"

The Fourth Annual Ladies' Luncheon, on November 10th, featured renowned speaker Dr. Michael Thompson. The author of many books, including his famous "Raising Cain," he has spoken at over 500 schools world-wide. An enthusiastic crowd of 100 parents, alumni parents and friends of the school gathered at Colony Club to hear him speak on "The Pressured Child." Co-Chairs Laura Billicic, Leslie Johnson and Kathryn Tyree worked tirelessly to make the event a success, and it raised approximately \$35,000 for the school.



Left to right: Leslie Johnson, Laura Billicic, Dr. Michael Thompson, Kathryn Tyree and Head of School Donna Kennedy



"Best Friends, Worst Enemies" by Dawn Kellman (parent)

On the evening of November 10th, Michael Thompson spoke to parents and staff of Gillen Brewer and the Cooke Center for Learning and Development on the topic of "Best Friends, Worst Enemies." According to Dr. Thompson, kids go to school because of other children; they are drawn to be with each other. Friends come and go, but there is always an intense yearning to make a friendship. Dr. Thompson defined friendship as a mutually reciprocal relationship. Every parent yearns to have their child "in the mix" and when they are teased, excluded or isolated, it's painful.

Dr. Thompson feels that kids teach other kids important lessons: the ability to be an effective communicator; modulation of aggression; sexual socialization; moral values; and self-worth. When children are having difficulty in their social relationships, the question becomes: How can we support them? Most importantly for our kids, if there are developmental problems that interfere with the typical progression of social development, adults must systematically work on social pragmatics. Friendship is a form of love and it's important to notice an attraction between kids and build on it. Children should be matched for both "chemistry" and developmental level. Dr. Thompson emphasized that any time children are having pleasure being together, that is friendship and it has value.

Banker of the Day *by Jordan*

Jordan won Banker of the Day in the 2009 Auction and wrote: This bank is amazing. We used it to buy the school. We used it to buy my house. I went to the vault room. It was amazing. I did some money calculations down there. I got the right amounts. I also went to the penny arcade. If you get the right amount, you win a prize. I won a folder and a sunglass clip. The bank manager is Tom Toy. Each strap has 100 bills except for 50s and 100s. There are five straps in a brick. A money brick is the size of a building brick. There are no 100s in the TD Bank, but there are 50s. For 50s there are ten straps in a brick. At 10:30 my class arrived at the bank. Tom and I took them on a tour around the bank. We showed them the vault room, the penny arcade and a supercomputer. We also saw a radio. Then Tom, Jim (*Collins, the GBS Business Manager*) and Donna (*Kennedy, Head of School*) and I had a power lunch at Uno. I ordered a plain pizza. Then Jim and Donna took me back to school. We were late. It was the middle of science. I loved Banker of the Day.



TD Bank Manager Tom Toy with Jordan

Philippines Relief Effort *by Fern Robles (parent)*

Gillen Brewer recently held a very successful donation drive for the typhoon victims in the Philippines, an initiative of the Robles Family - Jef, Fern, Jacob (Comets) and Joshua (Stars), whose family hails from the Philippines. Manila, the country's capital, was ravaged by a powerful typhoon on September 26th. The typhoon Ondoy (Ketsana) dumped more than twice the rainfall of Hurricane Katrina and caused the worst flooding the country ever experienced. Shortly after, the northern part of the country was hit by super-typhoon Pepeng (equivalent to a Category 4 or 5 hurricane), which resulted in massive floods and mud slides. The two typhoons affected 7.4 million people.



Fern Robles

The Gillen Brewer community responded in full force; the community may be relatively small, but one cannot tell that from the volume of donations that poured in. Families, teachers and staff donated clothes, blankets, towels, toiletries, shoes and non-perishable food items.

The Robles Family is very grateful to Donna Kennedy for offering to host the drive. They are also humbled by the generosity and compassion demonstrated by the GBS Community; they give a wholehearted thank you to everyone who donated, said a prayer, expressed concern or just tried to learn more about the plight of typhoon victims. To learn more about the relief efforts, please visit the National Alliance for Filipino Concerns and Sandiwa National Alliance of Fil-Am Youth website: <http://bayanihan4ondoy.wordpress.com>.



Patrick of the Supernovas also collected money for the Philippines and wrote, "My brother and I raised \$45 for the people of the Philippines. I sold oatmeal cookies, apples and hot cider outside my mom's work. I also asked for \$1 donations. I raised money to give to the people in the Philippines because they lost everything in the flood. My babysitter is from the Philippines and I wanted to help her family."

GBS and MoMA Partnership

The students in the Quasars and Asteroids classrooms are participating in a year-long partnership program with the Museum of Modern Art. The collaboration was initiated by art teacher Kate Gugliotta in order to allow the students to "get to know a museum" as well as for the students to feel comfortable in a museum like MoMA and to feel empowered to ask questions and to feel personal connections to the art.

An educator from the museum's Access programs will visit the classrooms and lead the group in discussions based around certain artworks in MoMA's collection. During the first visit, the students looked at Pablo Picasso's "Three Musicians." The students created a collage with papers of various patterns and textures where they were asked to imagine themselves as a musician and envision a scene in which to play their instruments.

We will continue to look at artists who were inspired by music and create both 2- and 3-D works based around the theme of music over the next few months. There will be a celebration and display of the students' artwork at the end of the school year.



Artwork by Kristin



**Fall Family
Fun Day**
Sunday, October 25, 2009





The Gillen Brewer School
 410 East 92nd Street
 New York, NY 10128
 Phone: 212-831-3667
 Fax: 212-831-5254
 Donate online at www.gillenbrewer.com

*The 2009-2010 Annual Appeal ends June 30, 2010.
 Thank you for your generosity!*

I wish to support Gillen Brewer in the following capacity:

- Founders Circle:** \$50,000 and up
- Community of Learners:** \$25,000 to \$49,999
- 15+ Association:** \$15,000 to \$24,999
- Mattie Gillen & Virginia Brewer Sponsors:** \$10,000 to 14,999
- Danny Fiddle Arts Enrichment Alumni Parent Fund:** \$10,000
Donations by alumni parents to the Danny Fiddle Alumni Fund are payable over 10 years
- Director's Circle:** \$5,000 to 9,999
- Benefactor:** \$2,500 to 4,999
- Patron:** \$1,500 to 2,499
- Sustainer:** \$500 to \$1,499
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Amount I wish to donate: \$ _____

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