

**Friday, March 5th, 2010**

## **9th Grade Friday Letters**

### **Homeroom**

Dear 9th Grade Parents,

Perhaps it is their innocence. Without a doubt, it involves their miniature proportions, but the fascination with youth is overwhelmingly about their simplicity and gratitude. Take the following line recently uttered in the Montessori school. "Thank goodness we're not tigers, 'cause it would be CRAZY in here!"

When we are new to the world, everything we see and do is literally "wonder"-ful. Whether we are male, female, human or canine, the world is our oyster and the only criminals we perceive are those that bar us from certain experiences. We suck our thumbs, do our biological business just about everywhere (including our pants), test all small objects that will fit in our mouths for culinary potential, and attempt acrobatic feats that would make a stuntman nervous. There is truly delight in our own physical and mental capacity.

Adults celebrate potty training, our first steps and words, but the various successes in our youth are not about pleasing others. There's simply too much out there to wait for applause and approval. What we do is a function of what we want. If someone else is there to witness our accomplishments, so be it. Either way, we create our own definition of success because that is what we know. Simplicity and gratitude.

As we grow older and increasingly informed of expectations and standards, it is easier to lose sight of this youthful fascination with self-discovery. Compulsory exams test our mental capacity regardless of our willingness. Study, stress, absorb, forget, and apply. Results return with scripts complete with stage directions for facial expressions. The "89%" scribbled in red ink inevitably shouts from the paper, "I'm gonna need an 'Aww man' with a right cheek contraction and a heightening of the left eyebrow. Come on muscles, this needs to scream comfortable disappointment!"

Ultimately, the result is just a number, and how it is viewed is up to the beholder. Youthful impetus for discovery does not die with the onset of adulthood. How else can one explain the mid-life crisis? If we take for granted our abilities, however, and fail to look with wonder on our own individual growth and potential, then we are just going through the motions, and it's no surprise that we often meet with boredom.

Grades can serve as a practical tool of motivation. There is no question that higher grades *can* lead to more opportunities, but too much focus on the number as an inherent indicator of success can also cripple a student's drive. If a student aces every test and never studies, is she inspired?

What about the student that worked his tail off to pull his grade up to a C-, only to be told, “congratulations, you are now average!” Is he motivated to keep testing his mental capacity?

In life, especially in adolescence, one of the greatest challenges we ever face is coming up with our own definition of success and believing in it. While a little competition provides a general idea of where to set the bar, it is difficult to find contentment if one only follows the standards of another. You are you and always will be until being is over. One thing’s certain, you are not him nor her. And thank goodness you’re not a tiger.

Yes, it’s true. Sometimes it takes remembering what we are not in order to assess who we are. Remind your son or daughter when grades come out next week that he or she is more than an extension of the numbers. Ask him or her what they learned about, what the grade might reflect, and if he or she learned anything about themselves in the process. Lastly, regardless of whether they feel discouraged or confident, remind them to keep exploring their potential for their own sake. There’s simply too much out there to wait for applause and approval.

Sincerely,

Ryan Ahearn

[rahearn@telluridemtnschool.org](mailto:rahearn@telluridemtnschool.org)

**A note on the spring experiential trip:**

Dear 9<sup>th</sup> Grade parents,

We have been working hard for weeks to hammer out all the details for our experiential trip to the Rich Coast, a.k.a Costa Rica. We would like all parents to join us for an informational meeting on Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:15 in Wendy’s room. In this meeting we will discuss itinerary, family stay, packing information and address safety issues and concerns. If you have not already done so, please check that your child has a passport that is valid for at least six months after the trip as we will require color copies to be submitted with the required forms.

If you are not able to make the meeting, please let either Craig or me know so we can get you the information you will miss. We look forward to sharing with you the details of our upcoming trip.

Saludos,

Wendy y Craig

\*Raffle tickets were also distributed this week. Students are responsible for selling one hundred fifty tickets each to help pay for the trip. Sales must be completed and ticket stubs returned by March 25th.

**Humanities**

**World Literature**

- Reviewed for the exam

- Completed final exam for the winter term

### **World History**

- Reviewed for the exam
- Completed final exam for the winter term

### **Geometry**

- Completed study of triangle similarity
- Practiced solving ratios and proportions
- Remotely measured height of school roof using a mirror and angle-angle similarity
- Examined how eyes and pin-hole cameras invert and create proportional images
- Reviewed in preparation for the final exam
- Completed final exam

### **Pre-Calculus**

- Reviewed in preparation for final exam

### **Science**

#### **Physics**

- Reviewed in preparation for final exam
- Played a combination of Pictionary, charades, and Cranium with review terms

#### **Spanish**

- \* Final exam study guides were handed out
- \* Students reviewed, asked questions and prepared for final
- \* Students wrote a 150 word story that they will use on the final exam

#### **Visual Art**

- Viewed and discussed final homework multi-media assignment
- Students participated in a multi-media imaginative self portraiture activity