

# WEEKLY BULLETIN

THE LIFE SKILL FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY IS HONESTY.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Feb. 15-19 *February Break—No School*
- Feb. 20 *Community Tree Planting Event Sponsored by 4-H Club (10am) McDougal Park*
- Feb. 26 *Parent Assessment Meeting—**cancelled & rescheduled for 3/5***
- Feb. 26 *End of Month Free Dress Day Charles Armstrong School*
- Saturday, Feb. 27 **Community Fundraiser!** *Exploratorium*
- March 5 *Rescheduled Parent Assessment Meeting (8:30-9:30am) Charles Armstrong School*
- March 12 *LD Simulation Charles Armstrong School*
- **July 6-30, 2010 CAS Summer School & Summer Camp—SAVE THE DATES!!**



## Community Fundraiser at the Exploratorium February 27th!

**Our annual Community Fundraiser is just two weeks away on Saturday, February 27th!!!** Have you RSVP'd yet? This event is always so much fun—you definitely don't want to miss it!

The online auction portion of our fundraiser began last Friday and runs until February 28th. There are some **amazing** auction items up for bid, so make it a point to go to our website and sign on to the auction from the home page... or click on [www.benefitevents.com/auctions/cas2010](http://www.benefitevents.com/auctions/cas2010) to go to the auction. We are still accepting donations for the auction even though it has begun, so feel free to contact Laura Birss at [lbirss@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:lbirss@charlesarmstrong.org) with any items you can donate to the auction.

## Sneak Peak at Fabulous Auction Items!

**Luxury Box For 16 to View San Francisco Giants Game at AT&T Park & Two Nights at Monaco Hotel in Union Square**



This fabulous item includes VIP parking for 3 cars, food, beverages and Giant's memorabilia! The luxury box is right behind home plate!!!

## Summer School

Class sizes are limited and the morning classes are filling up quickly, so we encourage all of our families to sign up now for CAS summer school while space is still available in academic classes and summer camp! Remember, if you sign up and pay for CAS Summer School and/or Camp Armstrong by March 1, 2010, you can deduct \$50 from your registration fees!

## Belmont 4-H Million Trees Project



The Belmont community is gathering together on **Saturday, February 20th at 10:00am** at McDougal Park in our own backyard to plant trees! Belmont 4-H youth, 4-H Million Tree members, and the City of Belmont are gathering together in a spirit of community and camaraderie to plant trees and slow global climate change. Because this event is hosted by the City of Belmont and not a "school" event, we are warmly welcomed to participate and help plant trees with our neighbors. (Please see the attached flyer). Please RSVP to Adrienne Foran at [aforan@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:aforan@charlesarmstrong.org) by February 15 if you think you may participate. Both parents and children are invited!

## The CHARLES ARMSTRONG Annual Fund

Thank you to the two-thirds (66%) of our parent community who have given to the Annual Fund. However, we still need 82 more families to give in order to reach our goal of 100% participation in the Annual Fund! Please help us reach this important goal and send in your annual fund donation today!

And remember, each class gets an **Ice Cream Party** when they reach 100% participation!

**Annual Fund as of February 10, 2010**

**Total Participation: 66%**

<u>Classroom</u>	<u>Families not yet given</u>
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Grades 1 & 2, Room 3	3
Grade 2, Room 4	3
Grade 3, Room 8	0
Grades 3 & 4, Room 5	4
Grade 4, Room 9	5
Grade 4, Room 7	7
Grade 5, Room 10	7
Grade 5, Room 11	7
Grade 5, Room 20	2
Grade 6, Room 13	10
Grade 6, Room 14	7
Grade 7, Room 15	8
Grade 7, Room 16	5
Grade 8, Room 17	7
Grade 8, Room 18	7

Online gifts can be made through the CAS website: <http://www.charlesarmstrong.org/support/waystogive.php> or <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=12509>

*Imagine all the children, thriving in this world!  
You may say we are dreamers, but we're not the only ones  
We hope this year you'll join us  
in the CHARLES ARMSTRONG Annual Fund*

### Winter Break!

There will be no school the week of February 15-19, 2010! Friday, February 12 is an early dismissal day, so lower school students will be dismissed at 12:45pm and middle school students will be dismissed at 1:00pm. There will be After School Care on Friday, February 12 until 5:30pm.

### 8th Grade Graduation Pictures



8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation pictures will be taken on Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Boys must wear a white dress shirt and tie, and we recommend that girls wear a nice shirt with no collar so that the shirt is hidden under the graduation gown. Students should wear appropriate footwear, as shoes will show in the front row of the group picture. Please avoid any brightly colored shoes that will not match our dark blue gowns. We will fit all students for their gowns in the next couple of weeks. Please contact one of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers with any questions. Thank you!



### Drama Corner

### Volunteers Needed!

Parents, we still need **lots** of volunteers to help with the drama production! Please turn in your volunteer forms to Mr. D as soon as possible!! Many thanks.

## **SCHOOL NEWS**

### ***The Life Skill for the month of February is Honesty.***

This month's Life Skill is honesty. While we all strive to be honest in all aspects of our life, this is not always possible. Children have a particularly difficult time learning how to develop the skill of honesty. If your child does tell a lie, it helps to understand why. The article below will help this make sense.

#### Why Do Kids Lie?

The first step in dealing with any unwanted behavior is discovering its root cause, says Bernice Lerner, director of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University. When it comes to lying, Lerner says, the main reason is often the very human goal of self-protection.

"People lie because they want to protect themselves," she says, "or to keep information from others that they think might have a bad effect." In the case of children, Lerner suggests, an additional reason is fear of retribution. "Many children fear what will happen if they tell the truth," she says. "And that fear outweighs the fear of punishment if they are found out."

Instead of linking dishonest behaviors to a specific age group or type of child, Lerner believes that each situation is dependent on both the child's age (both physically and developmentally) and on the individual circumstances. "It has to do with a lot of factors," she says of childhood lying. "I do not think it is developmentally based."

Many younger children first engage in making up stories and telling tall tales simply because they enjoy sharing and hearing these stories, according to the AACAP. The trouble is that young kids "may blur the distinction between reality and fantasy." For adolescents, lying can be attractive because it provides a way of tweaking their personalities and defining themselves, which is a major element of this developmental stage.

Lynn Ponton, M.D., a professor of psychiatry at the University of California - San Francisco and author of the well-known book *The Romance of Risk: Why Teenagers Do the Things They Do*, is an expert on why teens are especially drawn to risky behavior, including lying. "Risk-taking is the tool that adolescents use to establish their identity," Ponton says. "They do it to discover who they are."

Though it is therefore part of "normal" development – "as much as going on dates or hanging out with friends" – Ponton warns that dishonest behavior of any kind has a great potential to backfire for teens. "For many, secondary things take over," she says.

"People learn that they can maneuver people with lying."

By Matthew S. Robinson: Site: [http://www.parenthood.com/article/topics/a\\_little\\_fib\\_or\\_a\\_big\\_fat\\_lie\\_teaching\\_kids\\_honesty.html](http://www.parenthood.com/article/topics/a_little_fib_or_a_big_fat_lie_teaching_kids_honesty.html).



### ***News From the Business Office***

Dear Parents,

Last week we began mailing re-enrollment packets for next school year, 2010-2011. The enrollment agreements are due back Monday, March 1, to us. Please watch your mail for the re-enrollment materials to arrive. If you have any questions, please email me at [sjohnston@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:sjohnston@charlesarmstrong.org).

Thanks,

Sue

## **Transition News**



If you are planning on transitioning your child from CAS this year, please call Debbie Vielbaum at extension 264 to schedule an appointment. If you have questions or need help with the transition process, please call us — we'd be happy to help.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

Please forward any requests for letters of recommendation to Pat Piper at [ppiper@charlesarmstrong.org](mailto:ppiper@charlesarmstrong.org). Please do not send requests to your classroom teacher.

## **Outdoor Ed—Fifth and Seventh Grade Parents Reminders**

*Fifth Grade Parents — Wolf School Field Trip coming up fast on February 24th!!*

*Seventh Grade Parents — Yosemite Field Trip coming up almost as fast on March 22nd!!*

## **Escrip**

It's so easy! There are 3 ways to participate in the Escrip program:

1. Safeway Card Program
2. Escrip-participating retailers & Online Mall - go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) -> Online Mall & click on an online retailer and a percentage of purchases will go to CAPSO. Merchants include local grocers (Mollie Stone, Draegers, Lunardi's). There are over 1000 online retailers including Apple, Amazon, Nordstrom, Gap, Inc, multiple travel websites, etc.
3. Escrip Dining Program - Dine at your local restaurants that participate in the Escrip program and a percentage of your tab will go to CAPSO. Complete the dining survey after your experience and your contribution will be doubled.

Just register your Safeway, debit/credit cards for purchases at merchants and online mall. Please update your credit card information if you have received new cards. Any questions? Contact [naomi.shimizu@sbcglobal.net](mailto:naomi.shimizu@sbcglobal.net).

## **Sports News**

### **Street Hockey, 4th/5th Grade**

PLEASE HELP!! We have had only six students from the 4th/5th grade hockey team turn in their team jerseys. Parents, please check their closets, etc. and have them bring these in to the PE office. I'd really like to avoid having to buy more jerseys next season. Thank you.

### **JV Soccer, 4th/5th Grade**

The first JV soccer practice will be Tuesday, February 23rd after school from 1:00-2:30pm. Players should bring cleats and shorts to practice in.

### **Wrestling**

The first wrestling practice will be Thursday, February 25th after school from 3:00-4:30pm in the multi. Players should bring shorts and a t-shirt.

### **Boys Basketball**

Our next game is Wednesday, February 24th at Nueva School at 4:00pm.

### **Tennis**

Sign-ups are now being taken for this year's tennis team, open to 5-th-8th graders.





## ***Counseling Corner***

This week we would like to highlight some of the key talking points from the recent Common Ground lecture given by Laura Kastner, author and psychologist. Dr. Kastner discussed a key issue that confronts us all and is based in our brain's anatomy: emotional flooding. Kastner's work focuses on parenting teens, and the emotional conflict that plagues this arena. The basis of the emotional conflict, however, affects any of us, no matter our age. This is because we all have suffered from a phenomenon she calls the "Amygdala hijack". The amygdala is one of the most primitive portions of our brain, and was originally responsible for our physical survival. This portion of the brain becomes aroused when we feel scared, angry, threatened or otherwise emotionally aroused. When angry or aroused, humans increase their heart rate to over 100 beats a minute and become 'unreasonable' with black and white thinking, extreme emotions and poor communication. This primitive response has been coined with terms such as "fight, flight, freeze, freak-out, and flood." What makes this worse is that this state can be contagious in humans. When one person becomes activated, it triggers an emotional response in the other, and the 'amygdala hijack' takes over for both parties. Think back to your most recent fight with your spouse, child, or 'fill in the blank.' Chances are you had both been hijacked by your own brain.

The good news is that we have evolved, at least in potential. The more recently developed portion of the brain is called the pre-frontal cortex. It is responsible for our rational thinking, including planning, weighing costs and benefits of decisions, complex thinking, problem-solving and fair-minded perspective-taking. The problem is that the brain can only be working from one place at a time: i.e. when the amygdala takes over, the pre-frontal cortex shuts down. Kastner argues that parents (NOT children or teens) are responsible for shifting the atmosphere to calm, and presents a set of steps to get there:

### **CALM** technique:

- O Cool Down-Stop talking, breathe deeply, and consider exit—but with a humble "I" statement such as "I'll be more productive later after I take a breather".
- O Assess Options-Weight cost and benefits of ways to solve problem—this will access rational brain and begin to switch off emotional brain—think of at least 3 ways you could proceed.
- O Listen with Empathy-When re-engaging with child or teen, you should always open with empathy for them.
- O Make a Plan-Are there bigger problems that need to be addressed? What are some realistic ways to address them? Are there steps to avoid meltdowns and enhance self-control in the future?

Source: Kastner, Laura—lecture and notes given at Menlo School, 1/27/10



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[www.charlesarmstrong.org](http://www.charlesarmstrong.org)

# The 4-H Million Trees Project

- Invites -

All members of the Charles Armstrong School community to join with Belmont 4-H youth, 4HMT members, and the City of Belmont to plant trees to slow global climate change. Kids, get dirty while learning about the importance of trees in the climate crisis.

When: Saturday, February 20, 2010, 10 am

Where: McDougal Park, Belmont, CA

What: Rain or Shine, we'll be there to plant trees

Please visit [www.4hmilliontrees.org](http://www.4hmilliontrees.org) to learn about 4HMT, and view the video from the national TV show, Eco-Company.

4hmilliontrees@gmail.com



February 5, 2010

Dear Parents,

The Board of Trustees and school administration have met as we do each year to set tuition and build our budget for the next school year. Using a collaborative process we strive to find a balance that allows us to offer an outstanding program yet moderate the rise in tuition as much as possible.

We know this year has been difficult with a challenging and uncertain economy. In response the school eliminated all unnecessary expenses and only considered increases where it was absolutely necessary for the success of your child's education.

After very careful review and deliberation, the Board has set tuition at \$29,850 for the 2010-2011 school year, an increase of 5% over last year's tuition. Like last year when we increased tuition by 4% this represents one of the lowest percentage increases in many years. It compares with an average of nearly 7% for the preceding three years.

The primary purpose of our educational program is to **improve student outcomes through exceptional teaching**. To achieve this goal, we must continue to recruit, professionally develop, reward, and retain exceptional teachers. Additionally, we must provide a low student-teacher ratio and maintain our small group instruction. Your tuition dollars are used to support these goals. All other controllable expenses have remained constant or have been reduced for 2010-2011.

We recognize that, for many families, tuition increases of any kind may constitute a hardship. To respond as best we can to financial pressures faced by our families, we have also approved a financial aid budget of \$1,138,181 for 2010-2011. This financial aid does not come from the tuition you pay, but is provided entirely from the caring donations of current parents, grateful alumni of the school, and other generous donors. Everyone is very appreciative of their support that provides high potential students with the opportunity to attend CAS regardless of their financial circumstances.

The Board, faculty, and staff all look forward to another excellent year at Charles Armstrong School serving your children. Each year we become a more effective learning environment. We applaud your decision to invest in your child's education and assure you they are receiving the best education possible from one of the finest schools for children with learning differences in the country.

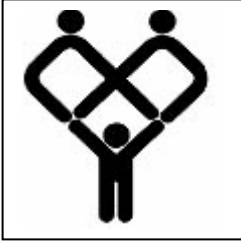
Sincerely,

***Claudia Koochek***

Claudia Koochek  
Head of School

***Steve Carnevale***

Steve Carnevale  
Board President



**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

A support and resource organization providing services for families of children with disabilities

**A Panel on Hearing and Speech for Children of All Ages**

Learn about hearing and speech for children of all ages, including speech and language development, assessment processes, services available, and where to find these services.

**Presenters:** Rupa Balachandran, Audiologist; Maryam Saleh, Speech and Language Pathologist; Shannon Simonson, Director of the Counseling and Outreach Department, Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California; Danielle Monastersky, Transition Program Manager, Teacher of the Deaf and SLP; Jan Christensen, Director of Educational Programs, Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California

**Date:** Saturday, February 13 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
(Registration opens at 8:30 am; Workshop begins promptly at 9:00 am.)

**Location:** **John O'Connell High School, 2355 Folsom Street (@ 20th St) S.F.**

**RSVP:** Reservations are required. Sign up early—space fills up fast!  
To attend a workshop, reserve childcare, and/or interpretation services, you must call in advance: **(415) 920-5040.**

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*You are receiving this email as a member of the Support for Families of Children with Disabilities community.*

*If you do not wish to be contacted, please reply to [tech@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:tech@supportforfamilies.org).*

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