



## **DESCRIPTIONS OF EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND COMMITMENTS**

### **THE START OF THE YEAR**

**New Parent Orientation:** This event kicks off your entrance into the CHS community. Plan to meet other parents from your class and other classes, enjoy refreshments, meet the teachers, and hear about the many magical moving parts of the Cow Hollow School community.

**Back to School Night:** This lovely event takes place the first or second week of school and is organized for us to meet, greet and review the CHS pedagogy, routines and policies.

**Home Visits:** These optional visits are designed to help your child transition from home to school their first year at CHS. Prior to your child's first school day you will schedule a visit to your home with one of the classroom teachers. These visits last approximately 30 minutes. You can expect that the teacher might play with your child, ask you questions (examples: What does it look like when he is sad? What is really important for me to know about her?), and you can also ask the teacher questions. No preparation is necessary for these visits. We have found that the Home Visit helps the child bond more quickly with his/her teacher and information discussed during the visit is used to inform the teachers as to how best support your child at school.

**Visiting Days for MWF and T/TH Nests and Treehouse Families:** Before your child's official first day of school, we have a visiting day. On this day one parent will accompany your child for the entire 1.5 hour 'mini-school-day'. During this 'mini-school-day' we will model circle time, have a little activity time, enjoy a little snack, and then conclude with a goodbye song. You and your child will get to explore the classroom together, and get a feel for the rhythm of our daily routine.

**Family Book Pages:** As we begin the delicate process of transitioning to a new school, new friends and new teachers, a new community is forming. This community is interconnected, supportive, interdependent, loving, dynamic and flexible. To help bridge your child's home experiences to those at their new school, we will provide you with the pages to begin your child's Family Book and over the summer, with your child's help, you will fill out and decorate the pages with photos and descriptions. The Family Book will stay at school during your child's entire school experience (growing and changing every year). The Family Book will also act as a tool to allow other adults and children to make important connections and build relationships with your child. It will be used to promote memory, as a historical reference, and to encourage shared meaning making and compassion.

### **EXTRA PROGRAMMING**

**Morning Birds:** Prior to the start of every semester all morning class families have the option to sign up for 1-4 mornings (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday) of Morning Birds (50 minutes prior to the start of the regular school day). During this time your child will spend time with one or two of the CHS teachers and other children. Priority acceptance to Morning Birds is given to families with work schedule needs. Drop-in may be available based on enrollment.

**Art in Action:** Prior to the every semester, Big Garden and Big Bay families have the option to sign up for Art In Action 1-4 afternoons per week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) after their regular class time. Art In Action ends at 5pm. During this time the children explore a variety of materials, art concepts and methods.

**After Owls:** Prior to the start of every semester Big Garden and Big Bay families have the option to sign up for After Owls for 1-4 afternoons (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) per week: an extra 2 hours of care at the Presidio YMCA.

**Extended Day Lunch Program for Little Garden & Little Bay:** Prior to the start of every semester Little Bay and Little Garden families have the option to sign up for Extended Day 1-4 afternoons per week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday): an extra hour of school. During this time your child will eat lunch with one or two of the CHS teachers, and join either the Big Bay or Big Garden classes.

## **CHS MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS**

**Parent Enrichment Requirements:** As members of the CHS community you are required (have opportunities;) to attend 5 enrichment events per year. For your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year at CHS, the mandatory events include the following: Back to School Night, both By-Class Roundtables (one in the fall and one in the spring), R.E.A.L Parenting and Teaching presentation, and 3 hours of Flexible Family Participation Requirement. For your 3<sup>rd</sup> year and beyond at CHS, to meet your 5 enrichment events requirement, you may substitute the REAL Parenting and Teaching presentation for Flex time, a Collaboratory seminar, or an Innovative Teachers Project Faculty Presentation (or attend R.E.A.L Parenting again).

- **Back to School Night:** This lovely event takes place the first or second week of school and is organized for us to meet, greet and review the CHS pedagogy, routines and policies.
- **Three hours of Flex Family Participation** requirement can be fulfilled in a way that best suits your family. This can be met by attending an additional Parent/Teacher Enrichment event, taking on an additional Teaching Parent Day in the classroom, helping on a Saturday Learning Tour for applying families, attending the State of the School meeting, helping with a teacher presentation, attending a Collaboratory Seminar or the State of the School, or arranging something with your class teachers. A form is available on the private Family Pages for you to communicate your choice for Flexible Family Participation hours.
- **Two By-Class Round Table Presentation and Discussion:** Due to the success and overwhelmingly positive response to these parent teacher discussion groups there are 2 per class per year. During the presentation and discussion participants will be involved in a co-inquiry process to delve deeper, uncover, discover, understand a problem, a concern, an area of development, a piece of a project, etc. Childcare is provided for the first Round Table Presentation and Discussion. The second Round Table in the spring, will take place at a larger venue and a few classes will present at a time.
- **R.E.A.L Parenting and Teaching Presentation:** This presentation will give you a glimpse of scaffolding strategies for guiding behaviors and skills and offer you tools and questions so that you may mindfully, responsively, respectfully, be in the presence of children. To parent or teach mindfully means that we commit to being aware of our own thoughts, beliefs and actions and parent and teach from facts; who we are, who our children are, and from our values. As a result of removing fear and fantasy from parenting and teaching we are more able to accurately, lovingly guide, empower, and protect our children. In doing so, we change the world!
- **The COLLABORATORY Seminars:** The COLLABORATORY is a CHS resource and a seminar platform devoted to offering evidence based information, dialogue, and inspiration about how children think, learn, play and build relationships. Approximately 8 times a year The COLLABORATORY hosts adult-only parent/teacher enrichment events for CHS community members, educators and non-CHS members.
- **The Innovative Teacher Project Faculty Presentation:** The ITP offers opportunities for others interested in supporting the potential in children to collaborate, formulate personal interpretations, hypotheses and ideas about teaching, learning and living. As members of this organization, certain years, we present our research on a theme picked by the ITP Directors.
- **State of the School:** This meeting offers a window in on the state of the school finances, a look back at our year and a window into plans and possibilities for the following school year.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** In the fall and spring semesters you will have opportunities to meet with one of the classroom teachers for an in-depth look at your child as a learner at school. The conferences take place for 2 days in the spring and fall and notification for sign-up will be sent to you 3 weeks prior to your conference days. Conferences are only held on the designated days and if you are unable to attend, you still will receive via e-mail the written evaluation. These conferences may include discussion of developmental domains, child's interests and competencies, and much more, using work samples, checklists anecdotes, and written and photos as evidence to support our findings.

**MOMENT Posts:** MOMENT is a parent-teacher communication app with a newsfeed and calendar that connects you to what is happening in the classroom, the school, and with our Parent Association. We use MOMENT in 4 distinct ways: 1. to share with you daily happenings in your child's classroom, 2. post, approximately, one journal per month containing teacher research, analysis, descriptions of process, and information about classroom inquiries, 3. to invite dialogue with you - what do you notice and wonder about when you are in the classroom? And 4. to keep you connected to the school community events and information.

**Professional Development Days and Time Away From the Classroom:** Faculty have time daily for classroom set-up and clean-up, data entry and analysis, weekly journaling, and communication with parents and other faculty and administration. To ensure a school culture of research and collaboration, where children's work is documented and visible, where there is a format for teachers and parents to engage in dialogue about learning and play, teachers are provided professional development days to meet with their teams or as an entire faculty. During this time they engage in reflection, critical dialogue, and interpretation of data. They make changes to the environment with new documentation, new materials and/or arrangements connected to their observations and analysis of the children's learning processes. Teachers also use the time to prepare for and attend conferences and/or community enrichment events.

## **CELEBRATIONS AND FUNDRAISING**

**All-School Family Celebrations:** Togetherness enriches a community. The purpose of the All-Family Celebrations are to provide times and spaces at which the entire school community can come together - sharing of food, cultural experience, and memory-making. Family Coffees/Pizza Party on the yard, Spring Family Fun Day, Parent Association Committee organized get-togethers, The End of Year Picnic will be some of the possible events organized. More details will sent to you closer to the event date.

**Year-End Celebrations for the Big Garden and Big Bay Classes:** All children of in the Big Bay and Big Garden classes, whether moving on to Kindergarten or staying on another year, close the year with a very special celebration of the learning community and their time spent together as co-inventors, explorers, and learners at CHS. Children and their families hear endearing messages about each child, prepared lovingly by their teachers. The purpose of this ritual is to celebrate each child and the unique role they served within their classroom community, who we have known them to be, and the memories we will cherish. Light refreshments are served. Every family member is welcome to attend. It is not a celebration of moving on, but looking back on who we know and love them to be and experiencing the close knit, nurturing spirit of our school. Each class will have their own special ceremony. More details will be sent to you closer to the event date.

**Fundraising:** The yearly CHS Annual Fund campaign is organized to bridge the gap between tuition fees and the cost of providing the school's programs and high level of specialized education that we have come to hold so dear. Each year our goal is to reach for 100% participation in fundraising efforts from our community. At the start of school we launch our 100 Day/100% Participation Annual Fund campaign, closing with a BIG 100 PARTY in February to celebrate our success and our community..

- **100 Day/100% Participation Campaign:** At Back to School Night we announce the development need and ask. Families wishing to discuss contributions may request a private meeting with someone from the Development team, including Development Administrators and Administration. The success of this campaign will balance Cow Hollow School's budget, ensure a robust Tuition Assistance Program, contribute to our reserves and is the foundation upon which we are able to maintain and build the school for the future.
- **BIG 100 Party!** Get ready for the best party of the year! Fun, fancy, and festive! The Parents Association hosts this wonderful annual celebration for school community members. Drinks, music, and delicious food are perfect accompaniments to a wonderful selection of COUNT ME IN's.
- **Count Me In:** CMI's are events hosted by CHS families, for CHS families that build relationships in our classes and community and raise money for our school. They are a tremendously fun ways to get involved. We're aiming for 100% participation either by attending a CMI, hosting a CMI or both :). Some of the best events are ones that resonate with your family interests and values. Some ideas could be: 1) an at-home cooking lesson of a special recipe (for adults or kids or both), 2) hosting a family adventure at a special place (tide pools, favorite hike, museum), 3) sharing a meaningful cultural tradition (we've had a family host a German lantern walk), or 4) teaching a skill like candle making, silk screening, photography, etc.