



Laurel Tree Charter School

Creating the Education We Want For Our Children

Rigor* Relevance*Relationships* Responsibility *Regeneration

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February 27th, 2017

Dear Laurel Tree Community,

Congratulations to our fabulous Shakespearean Actors. They did a marvelous job. There is a video of both casts and it will be available to purchase in the office next week. I hope everyone enjoyed their week off and is rested and healthy.

Over the break I've been reading Ken Robinson's *Creative School – The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education*.

I've seen him on Ted Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY> but this is the first time I've read one of his many books. It's fascinating and encouraging. The back of the book sums it up like this: "He argues for an end to our outmoded industrial educational system and proposes a highly personalized, organic approach that draws upon today's unprecedented technological and professional resources to engage all students, develop their love of learning, and enable them to face the real challenges of the twenty-first century." That's our ongoing challenge.

One of the wonderful things about working in a teacher run school is that we have the freedom and the flexibility to reinvent ourselves, to grow organically into an organization that does what Ken Robinson is talking about.

Another book I read over the vacation was called *Forest Kindergartens* by Erin K. Kenny. I ordered several books on this subject because this is something that our staff has begun exploring as the next step in the development of our primary program. Forest Kindergarten is a program that allows young children, ages 3-6, to spend most of their time outside in nature, learning through experience and play. Erin says, "I believe children between the ages of two and six learn best through direct experience with the natural world." I'll be sharing more about this as we explore it more, but for a quick introduction, check out this youtube video of a program in Chicago <http://wgntv.com/2016/11/28/forest-preschool-helps-kids-unleash-their-imagination-in-nature/>

As a staff, we've been talking about the new Transitional Kindergarten that is happening all over California. Children can now enroll in school at the age of four. We've been struggling with what we feel is really an



appropriate education for children that young. That led to a broader discussion of what we think is appropriate for five, and possibly six-year-olds. And that led us to talk about expanding what we already do with Friday Adventures and taking young children out into nature, with providing experiential and play-based learning. Thus, we began to research Forest Kindergarten. I'm excited because it seems like a natural extension of what we already do, of our values, and of what we believe about education for young children.

I'm also excited about it as Arden's Grandma. He turns four today. This school has always been about creating the education we want for our own children (and grandchildren). I see this as another one of the steps in our evolution that allows us to "engage all students, develop their love of learning, and enable them to face the real challenges of the twenty-first century."

If you haven't yet taken the Lead Teacher Survey, I'd love to have your input. It's only five questions. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HY95QPT>

I'm attaching the menu for March. Please note that there is no lunch the week of March 13-16. Alisha will be out of town and we hope to be having some kitchen upgrades installed that week while she's gone 😊 We're getting a new refrigerator, freezer, and heat sanitizing dishwasher.

And finally, the Read-a-Thon is beginning this week! This is a fundraiser for the library and reading program. It is an opportunity for us all to encourage and celebrate our love of reading. This year we are hoping to receive book donations presented directly to the library. Students and teachers have gathered a list of books that they want to have available in the school library and/or reading program. We have submitted this list to Northtown Books in Arcata. Parents and families can pledge directly to Laurel Tree to purchase books or go to Northtown and request to purchase a book from the list. Please note the following dates as part of the literacy events this month:

- **March 1: First Day to Log books read**
- **March 9th: Last Day to Log books read**
- **March 13th: Logs Sheets Due**
- **March 8: Dress As your favorite hero or heroine**
- **March 9: Celebrate Literacy Day (Students bring their favorite book and one book to exchange. Parents are invited to visit to read their favorite books – please let us know if you would like to be on the schedule.)**
- **March 15: Reading Rally-top readers from each color group will be announced. (Students must return log sheets by March 13th to be considered.)**

Pledges and books Due: As soon as possible
Calendar

Monday, March 6th – Board Meeting, 6 pm in the cafe

March 16-19 – Backpacking Trip to Sinkyone (Lost Coast)



April 17-21 Spring Break, no school
May 29th – Memorial Day, no school