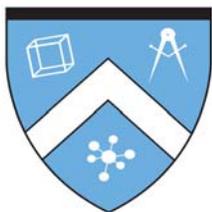


Columbia Secondary School Newsletter

November-December 2013
Volume 2, Issue 2



M362 - CSS
Columbia Secondary School
for Math, Science & Engineering

**CSS HOLIDAY
TREE & WREATH SALE**
Contact: Debbie Taylor Kerman
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Mark Your Calendar

- ◆ School Closed
Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 28 & 29
Happy Thanksgiving!
- ◆ 1st Friday Bake Sale, 12/6
Bring donations to the OSS
To volunteer, contact:
poopsypu@yahoo.com
- ◆ PTA Meeting, Library
Thurs., 12/12, 5:30-6 p.m.
- ◆ Family Science Night
Thurs., 12/12
West Gym, 6 - 8 p.m.
- ◆ High School Game Night
Fri., 12/13
- ◆ Tree & wreath pick-up or
delivery, Sat. 12/14
- ◆ SLT Meeting, Library
Thurs., 12/19, 3:45 p.m.
- ◆ Marjorie Eliot Jazz
Assemblies, Fri., 12/20
- ◆ No Electives Fri., 12/20
- ◆ Winter Break
Mon., 12/23 - Weds., 1/1
School reopens Thurs., 1/2
Happy 2014!

Newsletter Translation:
Anela Peña & Katia Perreira

Miriam Nightengale, *Principal*
Lenice Nelson, *Assistant Principal*
Dan Novak, *Assistant Principal*
Andi Velasquez, *Parent Coordinator*

Letter From Our Principal

Dear CSS Community,

As we head into the holiday season, I wanted to take a moment to send my thanks to all of you who help make us such a warm, vibrant and strong family. Here are a few things that have made a difference this year in the lives of all of us at CSS.

Thanks to steady pressure from the Facilities Committee headed by Kevin Daly, CSS has been scheduled for several facilities upgrades, including:

- Renovation of bathrooms, all floors
- 400 new lockers, to be installed on the fourth floor
- Two new cafeteria servers, to help speed up the food service at lunch
- Classroom conversions that will increase the size of rooms 314 & 316
- A new PA system that functions building-wide

Thanks to our amazing PTA, we have increased the opportunities and events for our community. Bake sales have been off the charts, and if you missed the first CSS social event on November 16th, don't miss the next one - it was a wonderful evening!

Thanks to the parents who help us organize and run events such as the Pre-College fair, and to the Friends of CSS, which has embarked on a development campaign to support our operational and enrichment expenses.

And thanks to our staff members, who bring endless energy and commitment to everything they do, and who are tireless advocates for our students.

Thank you all for what you bring to our community.

Sincerely,

CSS Revamps School Website; more user-friendly

The CSS website has been re-designed to give visitors quick access to school information. While it has the same url: www.columbiasecondary.org, menu options and pages are different. Content has been, or soon will be updated. The change was implemented by father-daughter team Nat Polish, president of the Friends of CSS, and 9th grader Annie Polish, working closely with CSS Tech Consultant David Ocampo and the student tech team.

The new site, which does not require log-in for most information, and the old site, accessed via log-in or an old bookmark, currently co-exist. For up-to-date information, go to the new site via search engine or by typing in the URL. Remember, old bookmarks lead you to the old site, which will be

phased out in the next few months.

For time-sensitive information, head to the home page and click on "Announcements." Messages and Reminders will be continually updated. Another way to find out what's going on at school is by moving your mouse over the calendar that appears on the right hand side of all pages of the new site. As you glide over a day of the month, scheduled events will pop up, along with the option to "read more."

By clicking onto the "Parents" section, you can learn about the PTA, SLT and Friends of CSS, check your child's grades and purchase uniforms. The "Donate" tab allows you to make on-line contributions to the PTA or to the Friends of CSS.

CSS Facebook Highlights School Events & Achievements

If you have a FB account and haven't *liked* the CSS FB page yet, what are you waiting for? Visit www.facebook.com/columbiasecondary.

As a way to summarize some of what has been going on at CSS this fall and to show you the kind of updates you'll get if you *like* CSS on FB, following is a sampling of recent posts and photos.



New York Cares about CSS!

NYC Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott, New York Cares CEO Gary Bagley, and CSS Principal Miriam Nightengale after launching volunteers.

Chancellor Walcott commended CSS for all the school has accomplished and then got to work helping the "bulletin board" team for over an hour.

The work of the volunteers was INCREDIBLE: the jam-packed storage room which will become desperately needed bathrooms was inventoried and re-stocked in a storage area created by volunteers on another floor; a weather and fire-proof bicycle shed was built on the ground floor under the supervision of Phil Hubbard; CSS bikes were re-located to the shed to facilitate the biking program led by Dee Martin and Dristin Birchard; the theater storage room was inventoried and organized; beautiful pieces of art were created based on student interpretations of the CSS shield; bulletin boards were backed and hung with inspiring quotes painted during the day; planters outside the school building were emptied of trash-infused dirt and replaced with fresh soil, mulch and bulbs.

What a great day at CSS!

Editor's addition: Eighty-eight NY Cares volunteers and parent volunteers Linwood Harcum, Maria Herrera and Ines Schmitt participated. Parent Suzanne Ventura brought all supplies from Long Island City and a CSS sixth grade family added to the beautification by painting the planters outside the building and planting lovely flowers.

CSS Celebrates Diversity!

The final act at *La Velada Cultural* sent people dancing into the streets. The potluck dinner was packed with friendly people and amazing food. The acts from Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador and Cuba were spectacular, and we hosted dignitaries from those countries. Thank you Professor Weiner and thank you CSS Community for the strong turnout.

Editor's addition: CSS's Hispanic Month included lecturers from Columbia University, visiting Latin American poets, and a screening of *Harvest of Empire* with journalist and CSS parent Juan Gonzalez, on whose book the documentary was based.



Council Member Robert Jackson presenting CSS with a check for \$151,000. Pictured: founding class parent Victor Acosta, PTA Co-President Mark Lewis, Principal Miriam Nightengale, Jackson, SLT Co-Chair Janet Miller, and students.

Bake Sale Bounty!

The Halloween bake sale brought in over \$800!!! Thanks to PTA bake sale coordinator Leslie Brown, parent shift volunteers, parents and students who donated delicious treats, parent

Suzanne Ventura for the Costco run, and businesses on Amsterdam Avenue between 122-123rd that donated: Kitchenette, Toast Chicken and the just-opened Subway.

In the News...

CSS was cited as one of the "most desirable high schools in New York City" by WNYC. Check out the elite company: www.wnyc.org/story/era-high-school-choice-manhattan-district-retains-elite-status

What kind of PTA meetings would you come to?

Our diverse and caring community is part of why CSS is so special. There are many ways for parents to get involved, and a lot of discussion and planning about how to support our kids and the school takes place at PTA meetings. If you are a CSS parent, you are a member of the PTA!

Many parents attended the September and October PTA meetings, but few came to the November one. Our plan was to offer topics we thought would be of interest to parents, such as a Town Hall Meeting with administrators and a Technology workshop, as well as PTA business like fundraising and events. Another meeting function could be providing a forum for parents to ask questions and raise issues with the principal, PTA exec. board and parent coordinator.

What would get you to come to PTA meetings? If you came to the first or second meeting, why didn't you come to the third? What topics would you like to see covered? Is there enough meeting promotion and is the time convenient? We want your feedback! Please contact: andivelasquez@columbiasecondary.org or call (212) 666-1278 or 666-2423, ext. 637