

“The Gratitude Garden” A Letter from Gabe Burnstein, Head of School

Dear CRS Community,

As the sun starts to set on 2023, I’m bursting with gratitude for this special school community. And I am not alone. In fact, the fourth graders have an entire wall in their classroom labeled “The Gratitude Garden” where nine-year-olds post gratitude for their teachers, families, and the opportunities in front of them at CRS.

One fourth grader posted: *“I’m thankful for Ms. Fishman for her patience.”*

Another wrote, *“I am thankful for my grandparents because when my brother was born they took care of me.”*

Across our campus, all students are directly taught to cultivate their own gratitude gardens. All of this gratitude isn’t just “nice” or about good vibes. In positive psychology research, gratitude is consistently associated with greater happiness. Our oldest students have led the way, opening every Friday assembly by sharing a moment of gratitude for specific experiences at CRS. Some are serious (“I’m thankful for all my teachers at CRS over the last ten years who have helped me grow.”) and some are lighthearted (“I’m thankful for chocolate milk on Thursdays.”) but all this practice helps our students identify the goodness in their lives, connect to something larger than themselves, and intentionally and publicly acknowledge others.

The thank you notes are also valuable primary source documents that demonstrate CRS values and culture. We can feel the way our students can be their authentic selves at school and how they value meaningful relationships with their teachers, even in their thank you notes.

A fifth grader wrote to her technology teacher, Nidhi Sharma: *“You are an amazing teacher, and I ❤️ how you always give me a hug when I walk by you. I’m going to try and get held back so I can stay in the same building as you.”*

Their letters also bring adults who we think are in their periphery right to the foreground.

A sixth grader wrote to Jay Reis, a member of the buildings and grounds team, *“Thank you for keeping the grass so pretty and kept up. We all really appreciate it.”*

Fundamentally, their notes express their joy of learning.

A sixth grader wrote to Mica Moellering, *“You’re so welcoming, and I want you to know that you’re an amazing teacher both in the classroom and on the cross-country team, as well as being a band instructor. Every time I walk into Foster Hall, I’m excited for the class to start. That’s why you’re awesome.”*

These December days are short, but while walking home from school in the dark, all I see is the tremendous light that our students give out to the world. I’m grateful to be part of it all.

Gabe

December



CHARLES RIVER
SCHOOL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 6:30pm Board of Trustee Meeting	6 8:15am 7th grade Ages & Stages in Dining Hall	7 3:15pm PA Event: Friday Cafe 5:30pm Rainbow Families	8	9
10	11 8:15am 4th grade Ages & Stages in Dining Hall	12 8:30am PA Meeting in Dining Hall Picture Retake Day	13	14	15 10:30am Winter Festival 12:00pm Dismissal	16
17	Winter Recess - School Not in Session					23
24	Winter Recess - School Not in Session School Reconvenes 1/2/24					30/31

