

“Beloved Community” A Letter from Gabe Burnstein, Head of School

Dear CRS Community,

Years ago, my former teaching colleague and mentor Lynn Bowman introduced me to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision of Beloved Community. After the success of the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King described the end result of nonviolent action, writing

The end is reconciliation; the end is redemptive; the end is the creation of beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not *eros*, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not *philia*, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is *agape* which is understanding of goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.

At CRS, it is not enough for students to limit their understanding of Dr. King to a few lines from the *I Have A Dream* speech. Instead, MLK Day is an opportunity for all children, from four to fourteen, to be empowered to take action *in this moment* to make all of our overlapping communities more beloved.

In other words, at CRS, MLK Day is not a noun. It’s a verb.
It isn’t about history. It is about the future.
And it isn’t restricted to one day, either.

Over the course of two weeks, each grade level worked on a special project. Prek/K and third grade students led the CRS community food drive for the Needham Food Pantry. Our youngest Otters not only designed signs announcing the drive, but they met with representatives from the Needham Food Pantry, and helped load the van themselves. Down the hall, fourth and fifth graders decided to inspire our CRS community to serve as more effective stewards of our earth. Their teachers led a workshop about the biology of composting and our nine and ten-year olds took it from there. They used their research skills to create informational pamphlets and posters, and then tapped into their creativity to write and perform a play about composting to educate our community— replete with a fourth grader dressed as a happy composting worm.

Our seventh and eighth graders centered their work on the community beyond Old Meadow Road by working and learning at End Hunger New England on Friday, January 19th. They collectively packed 2,880 meals to help feed over 17,000 people in New England. Like their younger buddies, they didn’t stop there – they shouldered the responsibility of teaching the community about their learning at our recent sharing assembly.

Yes, “the joy of childhood” is found every day on our new playground. But that’s not the only place where children experience it. The intersection of “the joy of childhood” and “academic excellence” is found in these lessons because students derive joy from meaningful work that is collaborative, active, and *relevant*. This month, our children grappled with big issues: poverty, food insecurity, and the sustainability of our planet, just to name a few. They didn’t flinch or feel paralyzed by the magnitude of these challenges. They felt inspired and empowered. When they look into the future, our children see what is possible when they put their collective heads and hearts together. They see a path to a more Beloved Community, because they aren’t just learning about it this year. They are living it.

Best,



February



**CHARLES RIVER
SCHOOL**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				8:30am Grades 4 & 5 Looking Ahead Event (for current G3 & G4 families) 1	3 - 4:30pm Free Girls' Lacrosse "Skills & Drills" Clinic 2	3
4	5	6	7	8	2pm G8 Basketball Assembly 5:30pm MS Trivia 9	10
11	5:30pm Compass Dinner 12	8:30am PA Meeting in Dining Hall 13	14	8:30am Grades 6 & 7 Looking Ahead Event (for current G5 & G6 families) 15	No School - Professional Development Day 16	17
18	No School - Presidents Day 19	20	21	5:30pm Rainbow Families Dinner 22	23	24
25	25	27	No School - Parent/Teacher Conferences 28	29		

