



OG PLAY

Thursday April 26th

1:15 and 7:30!

The OG play is set for next week.
There will be a performance for the school at 1:15
And one in the evening at 7:30
ALL ARE WELCOME TO EITHER!

Hello Everyone

Oldest Group Newsletter April 20, 2007

Writing a play—how the process works and why it is such a valuable undertaking for our students...

I can always tell when the process of producing a play has begun to really get underway because I begin to lose my desk. There are the inevitable stacks of swords in one corner, the clip boards and outlines, the drawings for the programs, the gels for the lights, the musical instruments, everybody's props, piling up on *my* desk for 'safe keeping' (silly children, don't they know what a black hole my desk is rapidly becoming!).

Every other year, we do a Shakespeare play. It is an incredible experience on many levels, not the least of which, in that it offers a rare opportunity for our kids to really experience this unrivaled literature.

Every *other* year, the OG is charged with creating an original play often based on something we are currently studying in class. As wonderful as doing Shakespeare is, there is much that comes with the experience of writing and producing an original group work that, to me, easily rivals any experience a classroom can have in any subject area.

Writing a play as a class is a truly integrated process for our kids. It is not just about acting, as this work presents kids with many opportunities for work beyond the stage—set design (often involving math!), music, costume making, lighting, writing and directing are all integral to the project's ultimate success and are all done exclusively by the kids!

In fact, through the process of creating an original play, kids find and draw upon strengths that they may not have known they possessed. *Often*, the student who does not relish the spot light on stage, turns out to be a natural-born director and it is their idea and insight which time and again drives the production forward. Some kids who can struggle socially at other times, find themselves garnering new respect as their talents shine forth on the stage. Many times, it is the bookworms amongst us who suddenly have major import because through their experiences with literature, they keenly understand how to best develop plot and character. Similarly, some kids who have never liked to write suddenly present brilliant dialogue, giving them a boost that will play out later in a big way when they turn back to their individual class writing work.

The opportunity for whole group work is unparalleled—everyone comes to depend upon each other in an authentic way as characters are created and honed, plot is worked through, and set designs are debated and implemented. All voices contribute and are honored even as many find themselves learning how to compromise and let go of their agenda for the good of the whole. Finally, we depend upon each other because each part in the play, each entrance, each line spoken is a necessary part of the whole. The feeling of the group after such a project is one of togetherness as everyone feels empowered; it has felt so good to all involved to find out what it is like to depend upon one another and have that faith bear itself out.

