

The next CAP meeting is Tuesday, May 11 at 6:00 p.m.

**Plan now to attend!**



## Reminder

**The School Health Fair on 4/24 is cancelled!**



## ***A note from two of our specialists...***

### **Science**

**Erik Taylor**

Spring is in full force—and our students are learning from the plant and animal life all around them. With overnights to Shaw Nature Reserve, Giant City, and Hawk State Park, as well as trips to the Zoo, Missouri Botanical Gardens, and Litzinger Road Ecology Center, City Academy students will spend much of their spring outdoors. And why not? The outdoors is a wonderful place to observe science in action, witnessing all the processes of nature that affect our survival.

In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, author Richard Louv discusses the need for outdoor play and exploration—not just on the football field or local playground, but in forests, prairies, and streams (areas where the surroundings are not all steel and concrete). Today’s youth are often disconnected from nature due to what Louv cleverly calls “ecophobia.” We live in a society that prizes what is clean and orderly—while in nature, things are often messy and unpredictable.

As parents, we often try to keep our kids away from what we think of as “messy situations.” But as Louv argues, children benefit from (and often enjoy) messy situations. Many



wonderful scientific discoveries have come from delving into messy things—after all, penicillin came from working with a fungus!

We should consider this powerful quote from the famous educator David Sobel: “If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to connect with nature and love the earth before we ask them to save it.”

Wet sneakers and dirty hands ought to become a vital part of childhood—especially since, as adults, our children will be asked to rescue a planet in distress. Many science careers of the future will be focused on how to repair or preserve a planet we have taken for granted. If our children are to be ready for this challenge, they need to understand the value of nature and feel comfortable exploring it.

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## Science (continued)

That's why so much of the summer science packet and summer exploration week will involve outdoor discovery and observation. The packet will encourage our families to explore many wonderful sites in our area, including Shaw Nature Reserve, the World Bird Sanctuary, Missouri Botanical Garden, Saint Louis Zoo, and Rockwoods Reservation. Let's give our children a chance to become inspired by the natural world around us. Working together, we can prepare them to take up the charge of conservation and preservation when they inherit our planet.

## Math Stuart Klamen

For the second year, City Academy students took part in the Equations Competition at Washington University. Hundreds of students from schools throughout the metropolitan area participate in the annual event, which is sponsored by the Gifted Resource Council.

The Equations game involves rolling dice with numbers and operations on them. Players are rewarded for coming up with the most complicated equations. This year, City Academy sent third and fourth grade teams to the competition. These students worked very hard in our afterschool Equations Club to prepare for the event, and I am pleased to say that our school's performance improved.

Students enjoyed spending time at Washington University, interacting with their peers from other schools, and being treated to ice cream afterward. And the Dividing Divas (the all-girl fourth grade team) won a special award for coming up with the best team name!

## Are You Smarter Than a City Academy Fourth Grader?

Our fourth graders have nearly completed the final fourth grade Singapore math textbook. Recently, they have been working on problems that are very advanced for their grade level. Here is an example from the fourth grade probability test. Can you identify the answers?

**Ms. Emerson picks a marble from the jar at random every day for 28 days in February.**

- a) How many times should she expect to pick a blue marble?
- b) How many times should she expect **NOT** to pick a red marble?



Answers: a) 8 ; b) 16