

Watching, Listening, Delighting

“Wise teaching, like wise parenting, begins with watching and listening and delighting in the learner.” This sentence, from Lucy McCormick Calkins’ *The Art of Teaching Writing*, caught my attention as I was thinking about this essay. The deadline for the June issue of *Matters* crept up on me and took me by surprise – how could it be the end of May already with the last newsletter ready to go to press! This surely is a metaphor for the 2002-2003 school year.

“Watching, listening to, and delighting in” our students describes my mood as I reflect on the past year. Today I sat on the Heritage House porch with preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners as they waited for parents to come at dismissal. Their physical growth is astounding and their awareness of the world around them has enlarged in equal measure. Other more formal opportunities to notice and celebrate the growth of our students have been present in great abundance. The Student Council sponsored Talent Show was a joyful occasion in which students and teachers shared their interests with the School community. Violin and bongo drum playing, synchronized dances, slapstick comedy routines and dramatic dialogues. I won’t soon forget teacher Marian McKenzie reciting from memory a long poem by Roald Dahl or teacher Leslie Hahne reading her tribute poem to Mrs. Miller.

Poetry reading continued at the release party for the third edition of *Global Voices: Poetry for the Planet and her People*. With tremendous confidence and authority, students read their poems that appear in the pages of this beautiful book. *Global Voices* includes submissions from other local Friends schools and next year we hope to publish works from international Friends schools. The messages of peace, beauty, nature, and concern are inspiring.

Field Day once again enabled all of us to enjoy the athleticism of our students and cheer each person on to the finish line. With good grace and generosity, students applauded one another, knowing that all contestants are winners.

We anticipate the Intermediate School play and graduation with anticipation, joy, and a touch of melancholy. While we know that our graduating sixth graders are ready to depart Friends School Haverford, we will miss them and their families. In Meeting for Worship in the past several weeks, students of many ages have reflected on the passage of time that leads to graduation.

I embrace the experience of “watching and listening and delighting” in the learners at Friends School Haverford. It is a pleasure to be engaged in this work with dedicated teachers and committed parents.

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