



Citizens of the World Charter School - Hollywood

Back to School Bulletin, Part 1

August 16, 2011

Hello Everyone!

While I've been in communication with many of you, both returning and new families, it is great to send out our first official Back to School Bulletin for the 2011-2012 School Year! We're thrilled to almost be at the start of what will be a fantastic year. From speaking to many of you on the phone, through email and at summertime park playdates, I know many families share that excitement and are eager to get into the school year routine. Hopefully this initial bulletin will help to answer questions you might have and clarify what the start of school will look like. This Bulletin will be followed by a second one during the last week of August. Between the two, you'll have all the information, forms and such to be prepared for **September 7th, our first day of school!**

In addition to laying out important information about school, I wanted to update you on things that have happened between the end of last school year and now. Most significantly, we are growing into a much-expanded space! Clearly, to house what will now be 189 students in our K-2 school, we were given an increased number of classrooms. In addition to the 9 classrooms (3 per grade level), Le Conte has offered several additional rooms for our use this coming year, resulting in extra rooms for Art, Music, and ASP. This will likely be our last year with a surplus of space, but we're happy to begin the process of expanding into the entire second floor and enjoying extra rooms for the 11-12 year. Above all, it's important to note, again, how gracious Le Conte's Principal, Jack Foote, has been in letting us have access to extra space – another great testament to our positive relationship as co-locators on this campus. With additional space, lots of work has been done to start prepping new classrooms. More work will continue to take place, some of which we look forward to accomplishing at the **August 28th work party**. Details about this event are below. If you are in town and able to join, please come for what will be a fun and productive Sunday of getting our school ready for Year 2.

At the end of last year, we had introduced all of our new Lead Teachers. Also, we have hired a number of new Teaching Assistants and After School Program staff, all of which will be important additions to helping us execute a stellar program at CWC. You will get an opportunity to meet these people on the First Day of School. We will also be publishing bios of our entire staff to the staff page of our website soon – so please take a look in a week's time to learn more about our fantastic team.

In the meantime, enjoy pouring over the details and join me in getting excited for September 7th. We know this is an exciting time for families, especially for those children who are starting Kindergarten. For all, we look forward to making this important transition back to school a smooth one.

With care,

Marissa Berman, Founding Principal



General Information about our After School Program:

We have been working hard to further develop the After School Program at CWC. After some outside research and thinking, we've decided to keep this program run "in-house," as it's the best way to provide a creative and well-run program at an affordable price. **Gloria Bigelow** will be moving into a full ASP program coordination role. We're really excited to have Gloria doing this, working hard to manage what will be a great staff of ASP teachers. Gloria's augmented role will help to ensure that the program maintains being one that is quality. Some elements of the program will be similar to last year but we'll have more staff and some new programmatic elements – more creative activities, more outdoor play, smaller group size, etc. Gloria will send out information and forms to sign up for September soon. **The ASP program will begin on Monday, September 12th – please note, it will not yet be in operation during the first three days.** Here is some basic information that will help you plan for how to use the After School Program, if you so choose.

- The cost of the program will be \$8.50 a day or (which is \$170 per month if you use everyday).
- Families who qualify for FREE lunch will be able to also use the ASP program for free. Families who qualify for REDUCED lunch can enjoy the program at a rate of \$3.00/day.
- The program will run until 6pm everyday and will always start right after the end of the normal school day.
- In addition to Gloria coordinating, we will have 6 teachers plus a Playworks Coach to run the program and work with students.
- I'm excited to report that, in addition to our general ASP program, we will be offering a slate of exciting **ASP enrichment classes** that, each trimester, will be an extra cost for those interested. These classes won't start until the last week of September, but information about them will come soon. Each trimester we will offer 4-6 classes, each of which will be held once a week for a 10-week session. We will provide a balance of classes per trimester and, with sufficient interest, will offer scholarship or reduced rate spots to those who qualify to maintain our model of diversity. Look forward to a balance of classes this trimester that incorporate science, cooking, art, movement and sports!
- Thank you in advance to Gloria for her hard work in this area!

Quick Reminders about the Start of School:

- * The FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL is Wednesday, September 7th and will run from 8:30 – 1:30.
- * The first three days of school will be early dismissal (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) with school ending at 1:30 all three days.
- * School will always begin at 8:30 AM, with drop-off to classrooms starting at 8:15.
- * On Monday, September 12th, we will begin our regular weekly schedule where school days on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays run from 8:30 to 3:15
- * All Wednesdays are early-release days where schools runs from 8:30 – 1:30.
- * ASP and Morning Care will begin on Sept. 12th too!

UPCOMING CWC WORK

To get our school prepped for the first day of school, we will be having a work party on **Sunday, August 28th from 1 to 6 pm.** Work parties are great community builders where everyone pitches in to get our school ready for Day 1. Plus, children can benefit from being on campus and acclimating themselves before school starts. We will have a ton of general or classroom-specific jobs to be done, ranging in complexity and time needed to complete. To make the work party successful, this is what we'd like to request of families.

- 1) Please bring cleaning supplies and work tools if you have. Things like rags, sponges, brooms, hammers, screwdrivers, and even drills would be great. If you are bringing things, please clearly label them so we can make sure they get back to you. We will also bring a supply of the above but often multiple tools/supplies are needed.
- 2) Snacks! It's always great when people bring snacks and drinks for people to enjoy in between jobs. Thank you in advance for anyone who brings food that people can share. We will set that up on the picnic lunch tables outside.
- 3) Children are welcome! We will rotate childcare on the field as a work party job and also have some child friendly jobs for kids to do in classrooms.

Hot Lunch at CWC!!

While the official lunch forms will go out in the second Back to School Bulletin, I wanted to lay out the basic structure of our lunch program. We will be contracting with Revolution Foods again, the healthy lunch provider we used last year. For more information about Revolution Foods, please visit their website at: www.revfoods.com. Additionally, here is information about how signing up for CWC's hot lunch program will generally work:

- If you choose to purchase, each day's lunch will cost \$4.00. For those families who qualify for reduced lunch, it will cost .40/lunch while, for those who are eligible, lunches can be free.
- Eligibility for Free and Reduced priced lunches are based on the federal guidelines of the National School Lunch Program. We will be sending out, in our next bulletin, actual applications. On those applications are the exact eligibility guidelines. Please fill one out if you qualify for either free or reduced. Applications will be available in Spanish and English.
- Families can participate in the hot lunch program as much or as little as they want in a given week. Purchasing of meals will always be done for an entire month. From Revolution Foods' expansive menu, we will offer a customized CWC menu each month that includes a mixture of meals that have been popular amongst our student body.
- If not before, September's menu and lunch order form will be available in the second Back to School Bulletin. Once available, parents can fill out and order lunches for the first full month of school.
- For the first three days of school, we will have pre-ordered enough meals so that we will have lunches for all students who don't otherwise have. However, if you know your child will only eat meals from home, please bring your child to school with a sack lunch for these days.
- **Whether your child participates in the Hot Lunch program, all students needs to bring a snack for each day of school.**
- In addition to fun nutrition classes, Revolution Foods will also offer food tastings throughout the year to both students and parents, so that more people are familiar with the various meals they offer.

THE INTRODUCTION OF MORNING CARE AT CWC:

For those really in need of an earlier drop-off to school, we have been working hard to develop a Morning Care program. While the details are still being determined, we wanted to share the following:

- ❖ **Morning Care will be available from 7:45 to 8:15, Monday through Friday, for the price of \$5.00 per morning.** At 8:15, students who have participated in Morning Care will transition to their classrooms for the start of the day. For those who qualify, reduced or free access to this program is available.
- ❖ This program is for families who have no other option and cannot drop their child off during the regular period of 8:15-8:30. We will have one staff member dedicated to running a mellow but lovely AM program, with basic activity stations set up for students who are there. With only one person staffing this program, we need to restrict it, however, to those families who really need it.
- ❖ For families coming anytime from 7:45-8:15, you will have to park and walk your child to the Morning Care room. Please note, Le Conte's start time is at 7:49, so this block of time on Bronson can be crowded and might affect those parking spots closest to our entrance. However, the Bronson Gate will be left open during this period of time, to make it easy for those Morning Care families to bring their children into school.
- ❖ Swift Drop-Off, which will start on the first full week of school, will not be affected by the addition of this new program. Swift Drop-Off, starting on September 12th, will always start at 8:15 by the Bronson Gate so that all students can be in class on time at 8:30. Generally, to deal with the influx of more students coming to school, we will have additional volunteers and TA's helping out at Swift Drop Off each morning.


Thing to Know About the 1st Day of School:

- Parents should walk their children into school after parking on Bronson or another close-by street like La Mirada, Fountain, Sunset or Santa Monica. Remember: there is no parking at all on campus due to there not even being enough spaces for staff members, so please help us by parking on the street. Thank you.
- Parking might be tight around the neighborhoods, so please allow for enough time so that you are able to drop your child off by 8:30.
- To help ensure a smooth transition, we'll ask that parents walk their child to their Gentle Beginnings classroom but not linger in saying good-bye on the first day of school. In fact, we'd suggest preparing your child, as much as possible, for a short and sweet goodbye. Staff will be there to greet them and bring them into the classroom space.
- We will have a CWC Parent Coffee (with bagels!) taking place just after child drop-off on the picnic tables from 8:40 – 9:30. Feel free to stay, chat and meet others if you are able. We hope that this will allow for parents to feel like they don't have to rush off quickly while still saying making the good-bye to their own child short and sweet.
- Teachers will be supplying a list of requested classroom supplies we'd like for each child to bring in. These lists will come out in our second Back to School Bulletin. We suggest waiting to bring classroom supplies until the second week of school when your child's class placement has been set.
- Students should be able to carry their own bag, lunch or other light personal belongings (jacket, etc.) into the school building.
- Hot lunch will be available as well for those who need or have already signed up.
- Please bring your child to school with a snack, whether they are eating hot lunch or not. Although we will have some emergency snack on hand for this first week, we will be asking families to provide this. We want to make sure all students have enough food to fuel their energy for the whole day.
- Pick-up at 1:30 will be at the Bronson Gate at the end of the CWC walkway!!

Our Gentle Beginnings Start

As you know, for the first three days of school, all CWC students, Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd graders, will be rotating in grade-level groups to different teachers and spending time in each of the classrooms. For Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, all students will be in the same group and will have an opportunity to interact with all teachers at their grade level and participate in first week of school activities. This is an important feature to CWC and one that we know helps us make balanced classroom placements for both our entire student body and your individual child.

Parents will walk their child to their Gentle Beginnings classroom each morning for the first three days of school. **In the week prior to school, our second Back to School Bulletin, we will be sending out the Gentle Beginnings groups, so you know in advance how your child will rotate during the first three days.** We will also have staff on hand during the mornings of our first three days to make sure that everyone knows where they are going.



2011-2012 School Calendar

We are also posting, with this Back to School Bulletin, our calendar for the school year. This calendar will also be posted to the homepage of our website. We will have a printed color copy for each family at the start of school. In the meantime, use this document to print out, understand and fill out your own family's calendar with all CWC school dates.

- ❖ What's important is that all families, as you plan your year, take note of all school vacations and other days off that occur throughout the year. As part of staying financially stable as a public school, maintaining stellar attendance is crucial. Please plan vacations and other family obligations/time around our school calendar, to ensure that your child is at school when we're in session. In addition to its financial implications, it's of course of great benefit to your child, academically and socially, to have them at school as much as possible, barring those unexpected illness days, etc.
- ❖ Additionally, please take special note of the two weeks in the year when we will hold parent/teacher conferences when there will be early dismissal all week. ASP will be in session this week to meet everyone's needs during a week of early release. During those weeks, we will ask all parents to sign up for a 30-minute conference with your child's teacher.
- ❖ Also, please mark in your own calendars important parent events throughout the year, such as: Back to School Night, Family Council Meetings, Winter and Spring Concerts, Exhibition Night and Step Up Ceremony/Field Day.
- ❖ Our two biggest fundraising events are the Walkathon and the Spring Auction. These will be much more spread out this year than they were last year. The Walkathon is set for Friday, October 14th. The Auction date has not been set but will take place in late Winter or Spring, as set by the Fundraising Committee.
- ❖ We have been thoughtful to not schedule Board Meetings and Family Council meetings during the same week. Board meetings, for the most part, take place on the 3rd Thursday evening of each month.
- ❖ Thank you for incorporating our school dates into your calendar and helping us maintain excellent attendance at CWC.

Parent volunteering and the first week/month of school:

I know the first day of school is a transition for all, especially for Kindergartners and their parents. To make sure everyone knows what to expect, here is what we ask from you to make the first day run smoothly. When you arrive, please walk your child to their classroom, take a few minutes to look around, help your child put their items away in their cubby, give them a hug and kiss goodbye and leave them in the hands of a very loving and nurturing Lead Teacher and Teaching Assistant who is eager to welcome your child to school.

In an effort to ease the separation, we ask that you do not linger and wait inside the classroom, especially during the Gentle Beginnings days. Throughout the year we will be asking (perhaps begging and pleading!) for your help in the classroom, but for the first few weeks we need to build our classroom communities and establish agreements and procedures with our students. Thus, as much as we desperately need your help and **LOVE** your time in the classroom, parent volunteers will not be invited to help inside the classroom until after Back to School Night. We will be asking for a variety of parent volunteers at Back to School Night, so get ready for the begging and pleading to start then!