



## Homework Hell-O

By Stella Rijeka

As a fourth grade parent I exhaled after the November batch of projects and book reports were turned in. Then December came and went, with only the multiplication tables to memorize.

Now, we've made it half way through the school year! I admit I can't quite measure "our" progress. After the third homework meltdown in eight days, 30% of X = Y do I care about education? Mental Note—recheck first report card. Cs just might be good enough!

If this is even mildly familiar—check out the back of the Brookhaven Warriors Homework Planner. Freedom awaits there! If your child screams questions through the house, scream back, walk calmly to his/her studying spot with a reminder about the planner's load of facts.

I can't say that I have had much success with getting my child to check the dictionary for spelling, but the teacher distributed the planner, so perhaps it's cool, or failing that, threatens detention—the new arrival's nightmare!

When quick reminders fail to keep my child on track, I confess, I turn to self-help books. Fortunately we live in Northern California. *Talking to Tweens*, by Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer tops my favorites.

Hartley-Brewer's tips are mined gold nuggets. I also recommend *Talking to Tweens* for a deeper perspective. From pages 177-182:

### Tips on Helping Tweens with Homework

- Homework teaches children to work on their own. If parents manage it too closely, this important skill is not learned.
- Offer some choice about where, when and how they do it. Even if sprawling on the floor is fine.
- Set up a routine, or agree on a time when it will be done by so it's never left until too late.
- Homework is for the teacher to mark, not us. Avoid imposing our standards on our child's work and being critical.
- If you see any mistakes, ask if your child wants to know. If he does, identify the sentence or area on the page and suggest he tries to spot it

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## Mark Your Calendar

**Wed., Feb. 10**

Parent Meeting, 6:30pm BH Library

**Mon., Feb. 15 - Fri. Feb. 19**

NO SCHOOL - Mid-Winter Break

**Mon., Feb. 22**

RPF Board meeting, 6:30pm BH Library

**Fri., Feb. 26**

Enrollment for '10-'11 school year closes

**Wed., March 3**

Culmination Celebration - School-Wide

**Thurs., March 4**

6/7/8th Grades - field trip to King Tut exhibit

**Wed., March 10**

End Trimester 2

## Parent Meeting Tonight!

6:30pm Brook Haven Library

Come join in a celebration of our successes and a look at what the future holds...

first. If he can then explain his error, it becomes a constructive learning experience, not a telling off.

- Find something to commend—frequently.
- If he seems stuck, be patient. Don't pelt him with ideas to get him started: children prefer first to decide what they want to do and then receive help to achieve it. Your ideas will stop him from feeling the work's his and he won't learn to generate his own with confidence.
- Be there to talk about it or look at it if he wants but to check it habitually will seem untrusting.
- Be sensitive to any tiredness.
- Show interest by asking what they had to do and whether they enjoyed it.
- Ask them to turn off the TV because it usually impairs concentration.
- Accept that they may need to wind down, eat something and relax with friends, siblings of the TV before settling down to work.
- Be understanding if they show reluctance. Few adults relish evening work after a full day's effort elsewhere.
- Don't compare the work to that of a sibling, either favorably or unfavorably.
- If he finds something difficult to understand, explain it in different ways. Avoid merely repeating a single explanation and getting angry, implying he is stupid not to grasp it more quickly.

### **The Common Mistakes We Make that Cause Upset and Create Crises Include:**

- Being too bossy and telling them what to do and when to do it.
- Trying to take over, injecting our ideas, methods and solutions.
- Chiding them for being slow.
- Berating them for doing it quickly and assuming it is therefore sloppy.
- Making them consider or explore a related issue that fascinates us.

- Asking them to attempt a more advanced, or just different, way of working for which they're neither ready nor prepared.
- Expecting a higher standard and thereby being too negative and critical when or if we check it.
- Complaining that the task is too easy and the school should know better.

If you made it this far, perhaps you're having the same epiphany I am.

## **Spanish Class: Campaign Speech for the Duck Presidential Campaign**

*Here's 6th grader David's amazing campaign speech for his duck who wanted to be president of the ducks (translated into English first, followed by the original Spanish):*

Fellow Ducks, we all know that it's time for a change. If you vote for me I will bring that change. This is because:

First, I have a lot of experience in the field of politics because I know Ché Guevara, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter and Hugo Chávez, and I have learned the political philosophy of Marxist Democracy and union organizing. For this reason I am forming a new political party that's called The Democratic Liberation Front of Duckopolis.

Second, if I am elected I promise that my administration will:

1. clean the environment.
2. give free health care to all ducks.
3. allow ducks to love each other even if they're not married, and allow all gay and lesbian ducks to marry.
4. allow mimes and clowns to be inside and out of ducks' homes in all of Duckopolis.
5. defend the country with a new weapon called LoL-CATS (silly cats) and exploding cheeseburgers.

And so, fellow ducks, a vote for me is an action of change.

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Patos, todos de nosotros sabemos que es tiempo para un cambio. Si votan por mi, voy a llevar el cambio. Este es porque:

Primero, tengo mucha experiencia en el campo político, porque conozco a Ché Guevara, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, y Hugo Chávez, y he aprendido la filosofía política de democracia marxista y sindicalismo. Este es la razón porque estoy formando el partido político nuevo que se llama El Frente Liberación Democrática de Patolandia (EFLD).

Segundo, si estoy electado, promeso que mi administración va a:

1. limpiar el ambiente.
2. dar a todos patos atención de salud gratuita
3. permitir el amor sin estar casado y casamiento legal para los homosexuales.
4. permitir los mimos y los payasos en todo de Patolandia, afuera de las casas y adentro de las casas, y
5. Defender la nación con armas nuevas de LoLCATS (gatos chistoso) y queso-burguesas explosivas.

Entonces, patos, una vota para mi es una acción de cambio.

### The REACH News Team is:

Greg Armstrong • Sherry Fader • Fred Poulos • Leila Rand • Stella Rijeka • Paul Schwebel

We welcome submissions! Due every other Thursday to Leila Rand: [mamabear1012@comcast.net](mailto:mamabear1012@comcast.net).

Contact Leila with any questions.

Do not grow old, no matter how long you live.

Never cease to stand like curious children

before the Great Mystery into which we are born.

- Albert Einstein

## Speech & Debate Club:

*Over the next few issues, we'll highlight some of the final speeches that were given at the Speech & Debate Club*

**Friends**, by Zane, 5th Grade

I made a speech about friends.

I feel very privileged that I have so many friends. Friends are people you can always go to for help, sympathy, and back up. Friends are awesome because they're always there for you in a time of need. They're also good for stealing your hat at recess. I always have fun with my friends and I hope everyone else can have as much fun as I do.

For me, the best thing about friends is that I can always share my feelings with them. For instance, one day I was kind of sad so I texted my friend a whole bunch and he made me feel better. I can always trust my friends to keep a secret, which is really cool.

I always have fun if I'm with a friend. It doesn't matter whether we're playing video games, skating, or playing sports, I always have fun. If I'm with a friend and I start feeling sad or angry, they will always try to cheer me up.

Friends are great because if someone is "dissing" me or being rude to me, a friend will always come and defend me.

I am so lucky to have friends and hope that I never lose them. I want to let everyone know that I think friends are one of the most important parts of my life. I hope everyone else feels the same way I do about friends. So, go friends! You're all awesome.



## Happy Valentine's Day!