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# PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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### e-Newsletter: August 2007

*This issue of the PSCS eNewsletter is dedicated to the memory of Laura Crocker, mother of 2007 PSCS graduate Melissa Brown, wife of 23 years to husband Ron Brown, who passed away on July 28 after a year-long battle with lung cancer. Laura was an important presence at PSCS, bringing a genuine warmth to all of her interactions, helping with school publicity, and teaching a popular gardening class. She made the world a better place for all.*

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#### 21st CENTURY EDUCATION

In the [April, 2007 PSCS eNewsletter](#) our headline article was about the importance of PSCS becoming a "first choice" school. For the purpose of this article we want to expand on that theme and talk about 21st century education, and why we believe PSCS is at the forefront of the most appropriate and beneficial style of education for this day and age.

Daniel H. Pink, noted writer, lecturer, a contributing editor at Wired, and one time chief speechwriter to Vice President Al Gore, is the author of the bestseller "[A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future \(2005\)](#)". The book explains how right-brain thinking is on the rise in modern economies and how our educational system continues to over-emphasize left-brain thinking. As described on his [website](#), "The era of 'left brain' dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, are giving way to a new world in which 'right brain' qualities -- inventiveness, empathy, meaning -- predominate." It is "whole brain" educational models, like that provided at PSCS now, that best position young people to be effective adults in the modern world.

In a recent interview for the American Association of School Administrators, on a scale of 1-4 (with 4 being the highest), Pink rated the performance of U.S. schools in readying learners for the global market as 1.5. A focus on making students memorize facts ill prepares them for a future in which they need to be able to think for themselves, be creative, empathize, tell or listen to a story, be adept at design, connect the dots, recognize patterns, and pursue an individualized purpose. For our

#### PHILOSOPHY

#### VOLUNTEERING

#### E-NEWS PAST ISSUES

#### MONTHLY QUOTE

*"The more you understand this array of diversity and responsibility, of opportunity and performance, of connectedness to others and to the planet, the greater your demonstrated ability to succeed in this world."*

– Daniel H. Pink

#### TESTIMONIAL

*"I salute the entire PSCS staff for the wonderful program and efforts that are put forward in the interest of developing responsible, intelligent, caring adults."*

–PSCS Parent

#### SCHOOL FUNDRAISERS:

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\* PCC scrip cards

\* QFC/Fred Meyer cards

purposes here, let's look at these seven things through a PSCS lens:



1) *Think for themselves.* PSCS students are granted the freedom necessary to think for themselves, their school days not being filled with dictated requirements but with self-chosen activities designed to help them achieve the goals they set for themselves.

2) *Be creative.* PSCS students are co-creators of just about everything at school, from the activities that get scheduled to addressing school-wide issues. And with the support of a talented and gifted staff, students learn how to create and then follow their own

unique paths.

3) *Empathize.* In the caring environment that is the heart of the PSCS educational philosophy, students get to know each other on a deep level that nurtures empathy and its cousins, understanding and compassion.

4) *Tell or listen to a story.* Our gender group meetings encourage students to tell their stories and learn how to listen while others tell theirs. Independent study projects include a reflection component that helps students learn how to tell what they've done away from school.

5) *Be adept at design.* According to Pink, good design is "utility enhanced by significance," meaning something with good design is both useful and unique, going beyond being simply functional to being individualistic. PSCS students are guided to design their projects and complete their assignments in individually determined ways.

6) *Connect the dots.* Guided by school principles, PSCS students don't just blindly follow a set of arbitrary rules. They learn how to connect the dots to see how their actions, goals and behaviors align with these principles.

7) *Recognize patterns.* Our small student-teacher ratio, not separating students by age, valuing cooperation over competition all demonstrate the value of honoring uniqueness. And by honoring uniqueness we help our students respect diversity, which helps them learn to relate one seemingly different thing to another, to see patterns, and to accurately use metaphor.

8) *Pursue an individualized purpose.* From the moment they are enrolled, PSCS students are encouraged to consider what they want to achieve and what gives them joy. With the help of their advisors, they learn how to set meaningful goals and then work to achieve them by matching them to their passions and interests.

This is 21st century education. It is not rote memorization. It is not learning for the test and then forgetting. It is not standardized testing. It is not about grade point averages that in the grand scheme of things mean nothing. It is about honoring

what it means to be fully human. In Pink's book this means providing an education that emphasizes whole brain learning. In short, it's PSCS.

### STUDENT SUMMER ACTIVITIES

In mid-July we sent out a message to PSCS families asking how our students are spending their time this summer. Here are their replies:

#### Andrew:

Andrew is acting in two plays at Seattle Public Theater: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy where he plays God, an inventor, Slartibartfast (see picture) and Frogstar Robot, and Arabian Nights which began rehearsal in late July. He is also watching the BBC Dr. Who series and continuing to expand his music and graphic novel collections.



#### Chloe:

Among Chloe's summer highlights are sleeping in, hanging out with friends, and listening to music. And, oh yeah, there was that week-long trip to New York City with just her grandmother and sister, her nine day sailing trip in Canada, and an upcoming week in Hawaii with extended family!!

#### Hunter:

Early this summer Hunter's family went to England where they stayed at the Culloden Tower. He commented that they had pet sheep while they were there since the nearby pasture is rented to a local farmer.



#### Joy:

This summer Joy is diving head-first into the world of theater. She is finishing a month-long revue in Everett, and says, yes, the air does smell better there!

#### Lilly:

Lilly is taking three visual art classes at Cornish School of the Arts: Life Drawing, Silk Screening, and Comic Creating.

#### Murren:

Murren is working very hard as part of the Young Actor's Institute at the Seattle Children's Theatre. It's 9 to 5, M-F, for seven weeks, with homework -- voice, movement, singing, combat, auditioning, acting, scene studies. He will also be involved in the **365 Days/365 Plays** project by Suzan-Lori Parks.

#### Narateena:

Narateena tells us she's been cooking up a storm, making all sorts of new recipes (at least new to her), and doing a major music collection overhaul. She has also been helping take care of Charlotte, Lindsey's baby (see picture), and trying to read all of the books she owns while getting rid of some so, as she says, "I have more living space."



*Tae:*

Tae is spending his summer going to summer school, working as an intern at the Seattle Glassblowing studio, taking glassblowing and guitar lessons, and hanging out with friends.

*Tamlyn:*

Tamlyn has shaved her head completely, added two new ear piercings, and is currently doing a month-long Counselor in Training program at Girl Scout Camp (River Ranch, near Carnation).

**YOUNGER PROGRAM**

On December 18, 1993, PSCS founders Andy Smallman and Melinda Shaw held the first organizational meeting that led to the creation of PSCS. On July 19, 2007, they met with a group of people interested in helping PSCS create a program for younger children. Among those present at the meeting were staff members Anoo Padte (who along with husband Vamshi Reddy hosted the event) and Scobie Puchtler, both of who have become parents in the last six months. The initial dialogue surrounded the idea of starting a program in the next couple of years for students as young as 5 and then, over the course of a few years, as these students grow in age and join with others, bridge this younger program to the current one so PSCS ultimately is an option for all school-aged children.



Another person in attendance at this meeting was Anoo's grandmother, Vasanti Padte, a well-known educator from India (in Seattle to interact with her new great-grandchild!) who has worked tirelessly to bring a more holistic approach to several schools in India. About our efforts, Vasanti said, "If one has the passion to bring about a transformation in human consciousness so that humans may live a holistic life, one that is different from how we live today, pretending most of the time, then one has to try and reach human children in their formative years. PSCS, which already has the approach for bringing about such a transformation, is the ideal candidate for starting a program for younger children. It was heart-warming to witness the involvement of parents and teachers at the PSCS Younger Program first meeting. It is very fascinating to see people involved in such a fundamental activity."

If the idea of our 21st century educational model expanding down in age interests you, please contact the school. The group plans to meet on a monthly basis.

**AUGUST- WHAT'S HAPPENING****SUMMER INTENSIVES WEEK**

The last in our summer series of week-long "intensives" is coming up the week of 8/13-17. Dana Bettinger will be leading "A Thousand Little Pieces: The Art of Making Books." Limited openings still available.

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