Dear C&C Families,

Several years ago, we undertook to explore some key City & Country practices and policies in greater depth and to put them in writing for our families. We're returning to this practice now with a 2006 issue of *Currents*.

In February of 2006, the Middle and Upper School held a Curriculum Night that highlighted the Jobs Program at C&C. It was an informative and hands-on event that allowed parents to get a deeper sense of the importance of the Jobs, and a little taste of the experience. Each Job was discussed and workshops for the Jobs in the IXs, XIs and XIIIIs were conducted. The articles that follow will highlight the Jobs in IXs, XIs and XIIIIs, with some general information about the Jobs in VIIIIs, Xs and XIIIs.

Although we can't replicate here the experience of working on the XIs printing presses, conducting newspaper interviews or analyzing supply catalogs, we can give you a sense of what the faculty and parents discussed and hopefully deepen your understanding of what we consider to be the centerpiece of our program.

If you have any comments about the Jobs Program or this issue of *Currents*, please feel free to speak with me.

Sincerely,

Kate Turley
Principal
Overview of the Jobs Program

To introduce the Jobs Program, Director of the Middle/Upper School, Sarah St. Onge, shared her knowledge while showing slides to illustrate each Job. The following reflects her comments about the Jobs Program.

The Jobs fulfill the tenets of Progressive Education, most notably, learning through experience. Learning through experience allows the students to engage with their work in great depth rather than in a superficial manner. It solidifies their learning by offering first-hand experiences in a meaningful and relevant context. When learning by experience, the process of learning is valued, and in the Jobs Program, the product is the process itself of providing a service to the community. When actively engaged in the work of the Job, the students get to know the myriad of tasks involved in the Job from the inside out, and thereby internalize their learning rather than solely depend on rote memorization.

The Jobs Program is also a partnership between children and adults. As with all tasks and work at C&C, the teacher serves as a facilitator—guiding the children rather than directing them. When engaged in the vigorous work of questioning, researching and creating a working Job, the students develop high standards for their work and a strong work ethic.

In order for each Job to flourish, children must learn to balance between individual interests and skills, and group needs and goals. This social learning helps children to develop a sense of responsibility—each individual task must be fulfilled in order for the Job to function for the whole Group, and thereby serve the community as a whole. Because they are performing real jobs that meet real needs, the children also develop a genuine sense of ownership and pride in their school community. Finally, at the heart of social learning is problem solving through cooperation and collaboration—all of the Jobs are a tremendous group effort held up by the numerous ideas, compromises, analyses and plans shared and developed among all of the children.

Our founder, Caroline Pratt, outlined three criteria for a Group Job: The Job must fulfill a real need and be useful to the School community; It must be real, in that the job is experienced in its entirety, as a job would be in the adult world; It must be designed from a developmental perspective and fulfill an educational expectation for the age group. As you will see from the articles that follow, the Jobs are what we mean by community—and community service—at C&C. Along with a research-driven historical study, the Jobs form the core of the Middle and Upper School Social Studies program, Social Studies being the heart of the whole School, from the IIs to the XIIIs. Through the Jobs, we can demonstrate the importance of choosing simple, meaningful experiences in which children can think deeply about their world, interact cooperatively with their peers and master the skills necessary to express themselves academically and creatively.

No one article can fully encompass the limitless range of experiences that the children will have with their Job; the open-ended nature of the program allows each experience to be unique to each Group and child. Instead, we offer you the opportunity to see why we continue to embrace the Jobs Program as a bedrock of the curriculum.
**Setting Up a School Service in the VIIIIs and IXs**

While the Blocks allow the IIs – VIIIs to explore their world in more digestible chunks, the Jobs serve to bridge the gap between Blocks and the larger world. By creating a smaller, more manageable community, the students are able to impact their world in a functional and effective way. By taking on a Job, the students are not only representing and interpreting society, they become active participants in a small segment of it.

In the beginning of the year the VIIIIs delve into their first City & Country Job—the design and maintenance of the School Post Office. The Group visits the local and main post offices of Manhattan, maps the school to learn room locations, works on the School mailboxes in Shop, and works in "committees" (Advertising, Merchandise, Records/Receipts, Delivering/Sorting, Jobs) over a period of several weeks to create their Post Office. In addition to fulfilling their daily responsibilities of collecting, sorting and delivering the school mail, the Group stocks and sells necessary supplies, creates stamps, creates and implements mail services such as "out-going mail" (U.S. mail). Inherent in postal work are a great many opportunities to develop and refine math skills as the children price merchandise, identify Roman numerals, sort mail, calculate profit margins, total sales and make change for customers. Also inherent are many letter-writing experiences as well as a study of how a letter gets from one place to another.

The Post Office is an ideal first job for the children for several reasons. It is a manageable yet very important job that allows the VIIIIs to have success in small doses, which builds confidence.

The Post Office introduces the VIIIIs to the new challenges of organizing and running a job. They learn customer relations and develop a rotation of job tasks, such as: sorting, emergency orders, mailing, stamp-making and many others. The importance of the Job in the daily work of the School makes it immediately clear to the VIIIIs that their Job is serious and their work is of tremendous value. By acting as the couriers of the School, the VIIIIs get to know the entire school community and become familiar with the buildings. This allows them to confidently interact with adults and older children. Furthermore, their knowledge of the community will continue to serve them as they take on each successive Job.

The IXs Job is operating the City & Country Supply Store. The IXs spend the first several weeks of school brainstorming ideas about what needs to be done to prepare their Store for opening and then tackling the list, task by task. Much work at C&C is accomplished by the Group in this manner, often asking the students to draw on a past experience as a starting point; in the IXs, the students will recall their experience running the Post Office. In his presentation on Curriculum Night, Scott Moran, former IXs teacher, described the 05/06 IXs Group’s initial questions for parents to better understand the work involved in getting the Store up and running.

Planning and research are integral aspects of all of the work of the IXs store. An initial framing question for the IXs is “Why will the C&C community want to come to our Store?” From the very beginning, the IXs come together to determine their unique value and create a vision for their Store. Researching the best deals to offer customers while making the Store convenient and
community-oriented are hallmarks of the Store. For example, IXs will get to know individual teachers' schedules and make special peddler trips to their room when a teacher might not be able to come to regular Store hours.

The most essential question the IXs must face is, “What do people need?” The IXs set out to gather information from various sources – they research supply catalogs, visit stores and conduct a school-wide survey that yields up to 3,000 pieces of data that need to be categorized and analyzed. Based on their analyses of this research - utilizing list, charts, tables, and graphs - the IXs are then able to create a basic list of supplies that they will order. This leads them to their next question - “How will we get it?”

The IXs quickly come to the realization that they need start-up money to begin purchasing supplies. After discussion, the IXs come to the conclusion that they need to secure a loan from the School and speak with the Director of Finance. Once they have their promise of funds in place, the IXs must determine where they can get the best deals and how to price them after they are purchased in bulk. During the Curriculum Night, Scott asked the parents in attendance to attempt to find some best deals—most parents found it to be quite difficult and needed extra time to complete the task! One of the initial challenges is using the index and table of contents from a catalog to find a very specific item, as there are endless varieties to sift through. The IXs must then utilize a variety of problem solving skills that are required for determining the best deal. Being that most items come in a variety of packs and quantities at various price points, all of this among several vendors – IXs must utilize complex logic as well as mathematical skills in order to determine the best deal. Accuracy in mathematics and great attention to detail are required for much of the work of the School Store; these skills are necessary for estimating, purchasing supplies, making sales, keeping accounts, cashing out, balancing the books, and following up on unpaid bills.

When the basic questions of stock are addressed, the IXs ask themselves “How will we sell our items?” The daily work of the Store must be accounted for and job organization must be put in place. Various systems, including creation of receipts and the definition of job responsibilities must be fairly determined and then rehearsed. Each student is in charge of several Store items and is responsible for continuing to find the best prices, placing orders, following sales, keeping track of inventory and determining when it is time to reorder. The Store demands tremendous cooperation and skill. Interpersonal skills are called upon time and again in dealing with teachers, peers, customers of all ages and the staff in the Business Office.

At this point, the IXs are ready to open for business and need to make themselves known. They ask, “How will people hear about the Store?” The IXs then devise a name, work on advertising in Art, create catalogs of their supplies, utilize the other School Jobs and even write a store jingle in Music. They ask the VIIIs Post Office to announce the Store opening and hours via round robin, they advertise in the XIIIs Newspaper and work with the Xs on creating signs announcing Store information. The IXs peddler job is put to good use all year long, as the peddler brings basic supplies for sale to classrooms and staff offices.
Throughout each stage of the planning process, while pursuing the answers to all of the above questions, the IXs are engaged in a dynamic learning experience that is as much about the act of questioning and answering, as it is about the results. The IXs learn to examine the needs of the School, utilize their individual talents, collaborate to solve problems and grow personally.

**Effective Communication In the Xs and XIs**

The Xs Job as the School Sign-Makers and the XIs Job as the School Printers allow the children to enact their Social Studies in a palpable way, while developing essential communication tools for the community.

The Xs Job is closely linked to their Social Studies curriculum. As they study the beginnings of language and written communication, students model the stages of becoming a master sign-maker. Each X will work through the apprentice process of completing a handwriting book in beautifully produced manuscript in order to create signs for each office and Group room in the School. In keeping with the children’s study of how writing developed from symbol to the written word, the Xs create signs for the School that include pictures and symbols as well as text. This not only broadens the scope of the Xs’ understanding of written communication, but it allows the children in the School who can not yet read to be able to comprehend the School signage.

The Xs then advance to journeyman and master craftsman stages as they learn calligraphy, before completing their masterpiece—an illuminated initial. The Xs learn how to make parchment from an animal hide, grind inks from stones, herbs, and bugs, and work with 22K gold and silver leaf. All of these advances in their craft reflect the historical developments of writing – from the emergence of cuneiform in ancient Mesopotamia through medieval transcription and illuminated text.

The Job’s emphasis on studying writing, something taken for granted by modern societies, emphasizes the importance of the emergence of writing in the development of Western societies. Literacy and its impact on knowledge dissemination in medieval Europe and Baghdad is further explored when Xs become XIs and study the revolution that the written word undergoes with the invention of the printing press.

The history of printing, from China’s discovery to that of Johannes Gutenberg, is included as an integral part of the XIs’ study. Students learn that the leap from transcription by hand to printed copies facilitated the dissemination of ideas throughout the world. The access to information that the printing press allowed is not unlike the digital revolution we see today. Innovations, as seemingly simple as mass-produced maps, facilitated world exploration. The XIs follow the lead of the printing press when they focus on Spain, joining Cortes and his fellow conquistadors on their journey to Mexico. Examining the impact of the press plays a major role in their studies throughout the year, as the XIs join the peoples of the Renaissance in their growing knowledge of the workings, places, and peoples of the globe.

Printing is perhaps the most exciting aspect of the XIs’ curriculum. The XIs are in charge of operating two Chandler Price Treadle Presses, which were made in the late 1800s. The XIs print all of the standard stationery used at the
School: Library Cards, Attendance Cards, Afterschool Slips, Late Passes, and Trip Slips. Producing these items requires the brand new set of skills of typesetting and operating a press. Printing is different from all of the other jobs—it is an intense learning of a trade that closely replicates the experience of turn-of-the-century printing. Not only must XIs hone their fine motor skills, develop their attention to detail and learn the ins and outs of the physical aspects of the trade, they must also demonstrate new levels of personal maturity that include patience, perseverance and dedication to tasks. Typesetting even one line of writing on a piece of stationery takes a tremendous amount of time and resolve; with that comes a tolerance for tedium and a sense of the integrity of all work. XIs must invest heartily in their work and come to know that the sometimes painstaking job of typesetting will yield a product that benefits the entire school community. The daily operations of the School depend on knowing who is absent, what Groups are on trips, who is in Afterschool and other important pieces of information noted on the XIs-made stationery. Finally, operating the presses not only requires developing the aforementioned skills, but an attention to safety and procedure is of the utmost importance. A safety test is given and a consistent demonstration of safely working on the presses is required throughout the year.

In addition to the work involved in producing these items, XIs are responsible for the business end of printing, including serving the customers, setting prices, and balancing the budget. The XIs draw on their experiences in the VIIIs, IXs and Xs to smoothly operate the business end of their Job. They also have the opportunity to work one-on-one with school community members as they create special orders of personalized stationery. The XIs aesthetic sense and creative abilities are developed in their work on stationery, as well as their work on holiday cards. In Art, they produce linoleum cut images to adorn their cards. This connects them to a school-wide audience, including parents, and further develops their sense of the various technologies and artistic skills involved in printing.

The XIs familiarity with the technology of printing is broadened when they create a literary magazine by combining new and old technologies. They write poems and create illustrations on Adobe Illustrator in
Technology class. The files are then developed into photopolymer plates. These plates are developed by photographic technology and are the image of the children's work in relief. The XIs then print from these plates and create beautiful, modern pieces, created on their vintage presses. This experimentation with modern technology allows the students to take their knowledge of the art of printing and further develop their aesthetic and technological skills. Applying their knowledge to modern applications gives them a sense of how printing has evolved and will serve them when they become XIIIs and must produce the School Newspaper.

Representing and Caring for Others In the XIIs and XIIIs

The XIIs Job with the IVs is a central component of their development as compassionate people. This Job is perfectly timed because it gives the XIIs a daily, emotional reminder of their ability to contribute to the world. The XIIs recognize instinctively how significant they are to the IVs. They certainly enjoy the time they spend with the IVs, but furthermore, they begin to analyze who they themselves are: they reflect upon how they themselves connect to the world around them. Looking at the IVs, XIIs see clearly how far they have come, and to some extent, what the road ahead entails. Significantly, they learn to act with goals in mind as they are now in a position of responsibility, modeling C&C citizenship through their mentoring of the IVs.

The XIIs spend two hours each week working as an assistant with the IVs' teachers, and at the end of each day they help the IVs gather their things and walk downstairs to their caregivers. The XIIIs keep a weekly journal of their classroom observations and analyses. In December they stage a holiday play for the community but directed towards the IVs. In Rhythms they spend time in the fall learning elements of dramatic presentation. In the spring, they write and illustrate a book for the IVs.

In thinking about how to write a play and a book for the IVs, the XIIIs need to consider the interests and concerns of others. This is an important first step in thinking about how to represent the community in the Newspaper. Another important link that runs from the XIs to the XIIIs is the idea of safety, care and protection - first in running powerful machines, then in caring for a human life, and then in how we represent the ideas, thoughts, and opinions of others. Of course, the overarching thread for ALL of the Jobs is cooperation, collaboration and group problem solving.

On Curriculum Night, the parents that attended "learned by doing" when they were given the task of interviewing each other, as XIIIs reporters might. The article below reflects that spirit in an interview style while examining the importance of the XIIIs Job of running the City & Country School Newspaper.

A Great Job for the XIIIs: The Newspaper

By Ann Roberts, XIIIs Group Teacher

Q. Why is the Newspaper a great job for the XIIIs?
A. Because it achieves a number of academic and social goals efficiently and effectively, at the same time it fulfills a purpose in the community at large. Any teacher who has dreaded assigning yet one more history essay or literary analysis would welcome the newspaper...
job because it gives students a more compelling reason to write than simply to fulfill the requirements of an academic assignment. Students are writing for the whole community, not just for one teacher. They are proud to have their work read by a broader audience; they take their job very seriously. Besides, staying late after school to lay out the paper, sharing pizza with fellow classmates, working steadily to meet the deadline—all are exciting. “What if a computer freezes, or we can’t open a photo file, or we lose the most recent draft of an article? What if the photocopier breaks down? Runs out of toner? Do we have enough paper? Where’s the money box?” Publishing the newspaper presents the XIIIs with a number of practical problems that have to be solved on the spot if the job is to get done successfully. Everyone contributes something to the final publication — an article, a picture, a drawing, a chart, a quotation, a puzzle. The XIIIs find the entire process challenging, rewarding, and, most of all, fun.

Q. What academic goals does the newspaper job accomplish?
A. Newspaper writing and research require many of the same skills that are necessary for historical research. Students must find and document sources, pull together ideas and supporting evidence, organize their thoughts, and write cogently about a topic that interests them. Moreover, newspaper work requires students to polish their ‘people skills.’ They must learn how to cultivate sources and to interview fellow students, teachers, parents, and people outside the school community. For example, in a recent article about the International Space Station, one of the XIIIs interviewed a bureau chief for CBS whose special assignment had been NASA for the past thirty years. The XIII had to overcome any reluctance to contact a complete stranger for information, had to know what questions to ask, and had to record the answers correctly. Newspaper skills are transferable to more traditional academic tasks.

Q. How does the newspaper job tie in with the rest of the Social Studies curriculum in the XIIIs?
A. The XIIIs read The New York Times almost every day. Current events often have a direct connection to our study of 19th century American history and its focus on the topics of immigration, industrialization, and the legacy of the Civil War. When the XIIIs read current articles about segregated urban public schools or about the disparity between the earning powers of various ethnic groups, they make a direct connection between their Social Studies focus and their Job. Polls, graphing and statistical matters reinforce work that they do in Math. Creative writing and reviews reinforce work that they do in Language Arts. The points of relevance are limitless.

Q. How does the paper fulfill social goals?
A. Every new XIII Group creates a newspaper that reflects its own distinctive character, and every XIII Group is different. That’s one of the many reasons that teaching at C&C is so rewarding and so interesting. Some Groups prefer computer-generated art to hand-drawn art; some prefer the reverse. Each year a new group of XIIIs will make changes that a subsequent Group may decide to adopt or to forego. For example, the class of ’06 divided its
paper into sections: C&C News, World News, Human Interest, and so on. The class of '07 has decided to incorporate this change. But every new Group strives to make the newspaper theirs, a publication that reflects their unique group and no other.

Other social goals involve the School as a whole. If the newspaper is to function effectively, students must learn how to handle topics with fairness, balance, and tact. They must also work to represent the entire School, not just their own Group. That means searching for topics in the Lower and Middle as well as in the Upper School. It means appealing to the interests of the students, young and old, as well as to those of teachers and parents.

Q. But how does one Group do all the work necessary to publish the newspaper every other week? Doesn't that take an enormous amount of time?
A. The job is daunting, but students become very good at it. As time passes, the whole process takes much less time. There is a strong sense that this job is a Group effort – that the Group as a whole takes pride in its paper – but that each individual makes a much-needed contribution to the process and its end result. The Group as a whole then relies on each of its members for specific skills, interests, functions.

Q. How do students decide what to write about?
A. The job of the newspaper makes it possible for students to pursue and develop their own interests. If a student, for example, is particularly interested in new technology, he or she can become our 'expert' on innovative devices such as the "Moto Q." If a student is particularly fond of sports, he or she can take responsibility for our sports sections. If a student loves to write reviews, he or she can specialize in that area. Nothing motivates students more than the freedom to pursue their own interests—at the same time they hold themselves to a high standard of writing for a real audience. The range of interests and topics reflects our C&C student body, a group of highly engaged and lively people who are concerned about such global issues as the genocide in Darfur to such local issues as the opening of Fantasy World on Seventh Avenue or the purchase of a new hamster for the Science Room. They write about personal issues like mother-daughter relationships, eating disorders, blogs and sports teams; they write about such civic interests as animal rights, community attitudes toward single-sex marriages, and issues of gender and diversity.

Q. How is it that the XIlls write so well? How do they find and develop their topics?
A. The XIlls use a journal to discover and to develop their interests. Students write for twenty minutes every night, or as many nights as they can manage, given other demands on their time. They may write about anything that interests them -- something they observed on the way to school, something they heard on the radio, a conversation they had with a friend or family member – anything that piques their curiosity. They are urged to record precise, concrete, and specific details and observations so that their writing has impact. They may illustrate their journals – their sketches can end up as fully-realized drawings in the Newspaper. Once they become comfortable with this process, they realize that free
writing can help them to discover ideas that they then may choose to pursue more formally. Journal writing can develop fluent writers more effectively than almost any other approach, so long as the teacher – a one-person audience – is thinking about and commenting on the student’s observations. The journal has an audience of one person; the newspaper has an audience of many thinking, curious people. Journal writing makes the transition to a broader audience less daunting. It is very important, however, that the teacher not correct for grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors in the journal. The journal has to be a ‘nuclear-free zone’ where students can write about whatever strikes their fancy without the inhibiting effect of having those ideas, thoughts, and observations ‘corrected.’

Proofreading and revision for technical accuracy are crucial parts of the process of newspaper writing, but not at its beginning. Many organizational and stylistic problems disappear if students are given a chance to think through their ideas in writing before they face the corrector’s pen. Technical editing should come later in the process after the student develops confidence in his or her ability to write something significant and interesting. Once students are invested in their work, they become motivated to clean up any remaining technical difficulties.

Q. Why is the Newspaper such a great job for the XIIIs?
A. The newspaper job motivates students to write and to research for a wider audience. The XIIIs love to see their articles in print; they enjoy hearing back from their readers when something that they’ve written is particularly successful or controversial. Letters to the Editor, chance comments in the hallways or during a bake sale all reinforce the notion that the Newspaper is a living, important entity in the C&C community. It draws us all together.