



June 17, 2021

Dear Families,

Last month, I logged onto Zoom to see Eunice's fourth grade math class. Shuiab was adding mixed fractions. At first, he made a mistake. Eunice gave Shuiab time to think. "Oh, it's one and three-eighths," he realized, confidently. He explained to the whole class why he revised his answer. Then, Shuaib muted his microphone, walked across his apartment, ducked into a bedroom, and came out with a toddler. Shuiab held his little sister on his hip while he walked back toward the computer. He bounced her, lightly, with his eyes focused on fractions.

On April 3, 2020, remote learning was in its second week. I loaded CPE1 laptops into a car. I delivered about twenty. My last stop was Shuiab's. His father was out front. He greeted me warmly, thanked me for the computer, and sounded casual as he shared incredible news: that morning, right there at home, a baby was born.

Today, that newborn is a toddler. That toddler has grown big and sturdy enough to be carried on a fourth grader's hip. That is how much time we have been living with a different kind of CPE.

Today is the final day of school. Maybe one gift of such a long year is having some much time to grow. What patience, responsibility, and grace children practiced this year. Imagine focusing on fractions *and* helping your little sister wake up from a nap, all at the same time. Come to think of it, you know all about multi-tasking at home. You have been doing it, too.

Families haven't been allowed in the school building. Some have been attending meetings from the subway or crosstown bus. Some have stayed with us all year, but from another state. We have been so far apart yet somehow in each other's homes. That made this year feel fragile, and special.

Changes arrive in September. It looks like we're heading back to full classrooms, back to early drop-off in the school yard, back to dismissal at 3:00. I hope, before the end of next year, we'll also get back to whole-class block building, children cooking in school, and All-School Sing. Many families are moving away. Some are graduating, and some whose children spent a year at CPE1 have never been inside. With all the children who started CPE1 during this unusual year and all those who will start in September, about half of next year's students will never have been part of All-School Sing.

Next year, like this year, we will stand on tradition while inventing something new. That's next year. I feel grateful for the year that ends today. I appreciate what children learned, how each family got through, and being part of CPE1.

Thank you for this year.

Gabriel