



The Independent Mind

JUNE 2008

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"In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

ERIC HOFFER

What is a Progressive School?

Most progressive schools are independent schools, but not all independent schools are progressive. Clear Spring School was founded on progressive principles in 1974 and has built upon those early foundations to become a national role model among progressive, independent schools throughout the country.

Some of the commonalities in all schools with a progressive approach to education are:

- Educators attend to helping a child become a good learner, but of equal importance is helping them to become a good person. School is not just about academics.
- Learning doesn't happen in isolation. Children learn along with and from each other as part of a community experience. Depending on each other is as important as learning to be independent. Setting up competitive relationships undermines this learning.
- There is an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving, not an environment driven by rewards and punishment.

With conflicts, there is less emphasis on the behavior and more focus on underlying motives, values and reason.

- Students are helped to understand themselves as part of a widening community, outside their own awareness of self, friends, ethnicity and country. There is a commitment to honoring diversity and understanding



the value and responsibility of helping others.

- When examining policies and practices, the main question that needs to be answered is "how will this affect the students' interest in learning?" This often limits conventional practices such as tests, homework, and grades because the emphasis is on promoting long-term dispositions rather than improving short-term skills.
- Students play a vital role in helping design curriculum, develop questions, discover answers, explore what other learning is needed, and evaluate their own success. Educators strongly agree that learning happens through

ideas rather than absorbing information or practicing skills.

Why Clear Spring School is Progressive

At Clear Spring School, there is the belief that children's needs take precedence over training future employees; a desire to nourish curiosity, creativity, compassion, critical thinking, and other virtues. Our PrePrimary students begin learning through the exploration of the five senses: experiencing their world through individual lesson choices, movement and play. Our Camping and Travel Program take students out of the conventional classroom setting and brings real-world experiences to learning. For example, students have had the opportunity to study Lewis & Clark by actually following the Lewis & Clark Trail, or searched the Louisiana swamp for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker in their studies of endangered species.

With all students from grades 1-12 sharing a campus, natural mentoring relationships develop. A High School student may take a moment with some 1st graders to identify a bug they found. Third and 4th grade students spend time reading to the pre-schoolers; improving their own confidence while supporting the enthusiasm of emerging readers. Building a strong sense of school community is the foundation for greater community involvement. Students conduct our yearly Trashathon county-wide cleanup, become traveling ambassadors during their travel studies, and in 2007-2008, collaborated with another school in Singapore as part of the Challenge 20/20 to problem-solve world concerns.

As students enter their last years at Clear Spring School, classes are presented in a block schedule to allow for deeper learning experiences. Students have the opportunity to develop internship opportunities for themselves to allow for in-the-field learning in areas of interest and future career possibilities. One student received his pilot license and real estate license before graduation. Other internships have involved working at wildlife refuges and organic farming.



Chocolate Lovers Festival

This year's 4th Annual Chocolate Lovers Festival was a great success! Approximately 1,500 visitors attended the event that featured several chocolate fountains, hundreds of pounds of chocolate in its many forms, professional and amateur contests and beautiful decorations.

The festival brought in more money than any previous year, its success being solely dependent on our many parent, board and community volunteers.

We still have several T-Shirts sporting the logo shown above, which was created by longtime local artist, Max Elbo.

Have you thought about...?

There are many ways you can support Clear Spring School with your contributions. Remember, we are a non-profit organization. Please consider:

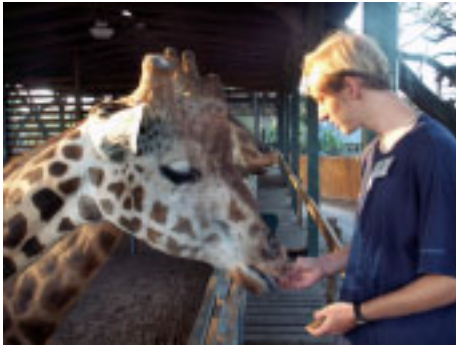
- *Naming the school in your will.*
- *Donating stocks to the school.*
- *Setting up a memorial scholarship fund.*
- *Talking with a significant donor on our behalf.*

Clear Spring Students Begins Careers Early

BY STEVEN S. WHITE

Several students at Clear Spring School have benefited from independent studies/internships this Spring. "These internships are strongly encouraged by the school to provide students with real experience in their initial careers of choice," says Phyllis Poe, Head of School. "These experiences will either reinforce their resolve to continue working towards this career, or help focus their efforts in other directions before they begin higher education."

These students sought out their own opportunities, spoke with would-be supervisors, submitted applications to the school for approval, completed contracts that included monitoring and follow-up requirements, and then they were off on their own to begin their self-directed learning. Senior Travis Rains is exploring a



future career that involves research with animals. Travis completed an intensive 4-week internship with Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge where, among other

duties, he prepared food, cleaned cages, and helped clear an area for a habitat. While doing all this, he paid particular attention to studying the animals' behavior and learning as much as he could about their histories and personalities. He followed this experience with a second internship at Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa, Florida where he worked with giraffes, meerkats, and many others. He hopes to spend next summer at a nature conservancy after completing his first year of college.

Johan Pot has wanted to fly since he was a small child. He began taking flying lessons at the age of 16, and received his private pilot's



license a year later. During his many hours flying over Carroll County, he became curious about the land, in seeing it from above, which peaked his interest in real estate. So, his internship goals became twofold. He spent time making progress on his instrument rating which will allow him to operate the airplane without having to look outside, meaning he'll be able to fly in the clouds. He also took a real estate class and is currently studying for the exam. Johan says, "I can't wait to start my real training as a real estate agent. I plan on hanging my license with Reichert Realty in Fayetteville, while attending U of A"



Since 2001, Dylan Seneca has studied woodworking with Doug Stowe in Clear Spring School's Wisdom of the Hands program. Now in his 8th year of refining his woodworking skills, he chose to participate in a more intensive study with Doug, and served as his assistant with the entire school. He created beautiful wood tops made on a lathe that he plans to sell as he continues to explore this field as a career choice.

It has been found that 80% of students entering institutions of higher education end up changing their

majors before graduation. Of these students who do change, 40% change their majors more than once. Poe believes "in a constantly changing world, one where new knowledge is increasing exponentially, students need to begin exploring work experiences as early as they can to help shape and direct their interests, understanding this will likely be an evolving journey."

Alumni Profile: Sara Stalling

Sara Stalling has had a relationship with education that she describes as “painful, beautiful and wonderful.” Her Clear Spring School years gave her the wonderful and beautiful.

She began attending Clear Spring School as a second-grader in 1979, when the school was housed in the historic Old Red Schoolhouse. Her earliest memories revolve around her relationship with Ann Fitzgerald, who she describes as an amazing teacher. “When I think about my early classroom experiences, it seems that Ann was always reading to us,” says Stalling. “My main memories are, of course, on the playground. The day the jungle gym was put up; racing along the Kansas Street path to Harding Spring.” These are the usual things children remember. But there are other things Sara learned – things like taking responsibility. “One day, all the students went for a long walk. I wanted to be with the older girls who were walking far behind our class, so I held back. When I finally got back to school, Ann talked with me about how my actions affected others. I was asked to take responsibility. I remember she talked with me in such a nice way that I didn’t feel like I was in trouble. I didn’t feel hurt or feel the need to shut down.”

The biggest gift I received at Clear Spring School was self-confidence. I was allowed to grow naturally, socially and academically, and wasn’t pushed beyond my ability. This was especially important for me because I was dyslexic.” The “painful” phase of her relationship with education began when she had to leave Clear Spring School after the sixth grade (the furthest the school went at the time), and enter public school. “This transition was very difficult. For me, dyslexia affects my spelling, reading, understanding sequences, dates and numbers. I couldn’t do rote memorization. These are all left-brained abilities. Always being a right-brained thinker, I had always

Been allowed to focus on developing creative aspects of myself, honoring my right-brained approach to learning.



“Because many teachers at that time didn’t know how to work with students with learning differences, I was put back two grades. I was the oldest and the tallest in the class. It was mainly this transition year that was so painful, because of the teacher I had. I remember this particular writing assignment she gave us - these were always a challenge for me. I went home and asked my mother to help me. I dictated the assignment to her, and she wrote it down, word for word, just as I said it. I then re-copied what she’d written. When I turned it in, my teacher said, in front of the class, ‘You didn’t write this. You’re not smart enough to write this.’”

“When I went on to Junior High, I had some wonderful teachers who could recognize and make allowance for learning differences.

“After graduation, I took five years off. This time was spent traveling, working, building friendships, and exploring what I wanted to do. For part of this time, I worked as Charla’s assistant at the CSS preschool, as well as teaching art and summer camp. It was then that I realized I needed to complete a degree to pursue my interests.

“I learned about Goddard College in Vermont and decided to visit. It reminded me so much of Arkansas, I didn’t feel like I was leaving home. I stayed with Clear Spring teacher Ann Fitzgerald, who had previously moved to Vermont. She bought me *real* Vermont boots and socks. I later spent Thanksgivings with her family every year while I was a student. Goddard was a perfect follow-up to my early learning at Clear Spring School. Students designed their own program, based on their interests, and we had input into building our own curriculum. I studied Art and



Early Childhood Education. I did an independent study working with women in prison, and later worked with parents coming out of incarceration, focusing on parent education in an attempt to prevent child abuse. It was about teaching parents how to talk with their kids.”

After her first year at Goddard, she took a year off and moved to Paris to work as a nanny. When she returned, she fell in love with fellow Goddard student David Spitzer, got married, and had their son, Maya, during her last year as an undergraduate.

Sara continued her exploration of the connection between art and early childhood learning, by focusing

her graduate studies on art therapy. “I used myself as a guinea to study learning differences. I re-learned how to spell again. I became more comfortable with my own struggle.”

Sara received her Masters in Education in 2007. She now makes her home in Lawrence, Kansas, where she’s a part-time teacher for a community nursery school, designs costumes for the Drama Department of Lawrence Art Center, and teaches therapeutic art at GaDagi, a Center that helps victims of sexual violence. And if this isn’t a full-enough life, along with husband David, she home-schools their son, Maya, 7.

Sara now dedicates her life to education. “Now I see education as a form of living; and the same with art. True art is living your life the best you can. Therefore, the things you create will be filled with purpose, meaning and beauty.”

Sara Stalling was the keynote speaker for Clear Spring School’s 2008 Graduation Ceremony.

Alumni Update Briefs

Alannah Massey, a former student and teacher at Clear Spring School, and graduate of the University of Arkansas, is currently the Sponsored Programs Coordinator for the University of Arkansas’ Spring International Language Center. Alannah has one daughter, Stella, 14.

Laurel Barnes lives in Los Angeles, with her partner of 11 years, Eric, who works in the film industry. Laurel recently graduated from California State University with her masters degree in social work, which she will put to use in LA County’s Department of Children and Family Services working in foster care and adoptions.

Rima Meadows travels around the world teaching Erythmy, an educational tool with its roots in the Waldorf approach to education. This spring she presented a class to the high school students at Clear Spring School during a recent visit.

Sigrid Kline was recently awarded a 5-month long internship at a restaurant in Maui through the New York Culinary Arts Institute.



Michael Seeligson just completed his 2nd year of law school at the University of Virginia. He received his law school’s nomination to spend his third year in Paris at a joint program run by Sciences Po and the Sorbonne.

Lucy Stowe has completed her first year at Columbia University. She has been selected to be a part of a 35-person research team for a voyage on a vessel owned by Columbia University and the National Science Foundation. They will be conducting sonar imaging of the ocean floor taken from above an area of the Pacific Ocean containing a major fault line.

Maija Wallace attended the Arkansas School of Math, Sciences and the Arts in Hot Springs for her last two years of high school. She completed her work at ASMSA this year as one of only two students with a 4.0 grade average. She walked with her Clear Spring class at this year’s graduation ceremony.

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Together, all at Clear Spring School promote a lifelong love of learning through a hands-on and hearts-engaged educational environment.

Clear Spring School Class of 2008



Paige Goodman Wolven

Paige will be attending Hendrix College this Fall, majoring in Elementary Education.

Johan Pot

Johan already has his pilot's license and is working towards a real estate license. He will be attending the University of Arkansas, Majoring in Business.



Travis Rains *has attended Clear Spring School since his PrePrimary years. He plans to attend the University of Arkansas, majoring in Biology.*

Dylan Seneca

Dylan has attended Clear Spring School since kindergarten. He plans to make a career of his love for woodworking.



Peggy Wu *is an exchange student from Thailand. She plans to attend university in her home country.*

Jina Yamaguchi

Jina is an exchange student from Japan. She plans to return to her home country and attend university.



More About Journeys Than Destinations

This year the high school students took a 12-day trip, setting the record for the longest Clear Spring Trip ever.

This journey brought to life their studies of the natural environment and how it affects human settlement and development.

They visited the Cowboy

Museum in Oklahoma City and drove through the panhandle, where things become quite shockingly flat. After reaching New Mexico things got a bit more mountainous, and they visited the Taos Pueblo, which is the oldest continually inhabited pueblo village in the United States. After this they went on to spend three days in Ghost Ranch, a retreat center in the New Mexico wilderness. They hiked mesas and learned about the unique geological formations of this semi-arid region of the country, and about the abundance of dinosaur bones to be found there.



but even the acrophobic students concluded it was worth it to walk through these amazing examples of Native American architecture, some parts of which are many thousands of years old.

The students stopped in at Four Corners, the only place in the country common to four states, and played a few rounds of, what else, 4-Square.

From Mesa Verde it was a short hop to The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. One of the strangest sights in the United States, hidden in a “bowl” in the Rocky Mountains, the Great Sand Dunes are just that, truly gigantic sand dunes with mountains behind them and a lush marshland below them. This strange natural combination of three ecosystems has created a unique area. And, of course, a really fun place to roll around in the sand.

The 7th & 8th -grade Fall Trip was a big success! After camping at Blanchard Springs State Park, they toured the world-class mineral collection at the Golden museum in Golden, Missouri. Then came two harrowing nights at Roaring River State Park (tornado warning the first night, flood warning the second). A fascinating visit to the Steamship Arabia (a salvaged boat filled with pre-Civil War artifacts) in Kansas City capped off our adventures.

Other travels took the lower middle school class through the State of Arkansas where they visited Mount Ida and Murfreesboro, digging for crystals and diamonds. In their studies of the 6 geologic regions of Arkansas, they visited the Toltec Mounds, went to the peak of Mount Magazine, the State’s highest point, and relived life during the Civil War years at Washington State Park.



After Ghost Ranch they visited Chaco Canyon and made their way into Colorado, where they toured the famous cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park. This required a little bit of climbing and scrambling,

Tax Deductible Contribution Form

Clear Spring School is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We rely upon the financial support of individual and corporate contributions for us to continue providing the quality education we've been known for since 1974. If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to Clear Spring School, please complete this form and mail it with your donation to CSS, P.O. Box 511, Eureka Springs, AR 72632.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____

I have enclosed \$ _____ towards:

Annual Fund Wisdom of the Hands

Adopt Excellence Other _____

Thank you for your generous gift!



**P.O. Box 511
374 Dairy Hollow Road
Eureka Springs, AR 72632**

Did you know that Clear Spring School:

- *Has 6 teachers and staff members who have worked at CSS for over 10 years each? Combined, we have over 80 years of CSS experience among our current staff.*
- *Was housed at 4 locations before the current location, where we've been for 20 years.*
- *Has alumni who have lived or attended schools and universities in Argentina, Chile, China, England, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holland, India, Japan, Mexico, Nova Scotia, Portugal, Scotland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, The Virgin Islands and more.*
- *Has hosted foreign exchange students from Germany, Japan, Korea (2), Norway, Thailand (3), and Vietnam.*
- *Has had families move from the following states just so their children could attend Clear Spring School: California, Nebraska, New York and North Carolina.*
- *Has received inquiries from families living in the following states just this year: Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Iowa, Mississippi and Utah.*