

Kindergarten – a Place for Transitioning

by Brenda Gustin

Presented to Parents of *Friends of Grant Park*

Kindergarten Panel Night

February 13, 2007

Kindergarten is a place for transitioning. It is a place where children are given the opportunity to expand their world. A place to learn that it's safe to express themselves and to meet new people.

When I remember my year in kindergarten, I remember playing hopscotch and climbing the bars. I remember how fun it was for me to meet and play with others – other kids different than the ones I had been with at home, with family, and at the babysitter's.

I remember my teacher being kind to us. I remember snack time, story time and the games we played in the play yard.

To me, kindergarten is a place for children to become comfortable with themselves in a larger world and to learn about how they are different and the same as others.

It is a place to become more independent from parents, family, and caregivers and to learn how to trust themselves and others.

In a way, it is preparation for future years in school, but moreso for me, it is a place for 5 and 6 year old children to learn they can be safe outside of their familiar surroundings; that they can do more without the help of their parents; and they can experience an expansion of life that is full of people who like to learn and have fun together.

Sacramento Valley School school provides these opportunities and more. At SVS, children play together and learn many things. The learning is varied. Some, who have never really spent much time away from close family and caregivers, learn that it is safe to talk to other people – of all ages – who they do not know. Some learn that they like to sing or play the piano. Some learn that they love to paint, or do math, or read stories. Some like to tell stories, write stories or listen while others read.

They have the opportunity to learn how to cook pies, make gingerbread houses, pizza, and a variety of other foods. They learn how to make lunch, wash dishes, and care for their personal possessions such as keeping track of toys they have brought in to share or rediscover where they have left their shoes when they decided to run barefoot. Kids learn how to swing without assistance or maybe test their skills climbing the bars or the fig tree.

The way kids learn these things and more are through living their daily lives in a community with people of all ages. They learn who they like to ask for help in spelling a word or writing the letters of the alphabet. They learn who's good at sewing, helping them with their checkbook or cursive writing, or helping them complete an art project when they need a second or third hand. When upset, they learn who they feel safe to speak with and who might be able to assist them in facing a problem.

Our school is modeled after the one-room schoolhouse. Each child is honored for who they are and guided through trust and respect of their individual personality and interests. The structure of the school fits within the individual needs of each family. Whether your family needs full or part-time schooling, your

children can arrive at times throughout the day that fulfills your needs and supports your child's readiness for separation. We offer integrative schooling for children ages 5 – 18.

Both Gypsy and I are staff members. We look forward to speaking with you to explore what Sacramento Valley School has to offer to your family.

Thank you for your time.