



THE CLEARWATER SCHOOL

The Clearwater School is Seattle's Sudbury school. We provide an educational alternative based on **Trust, Freedom and Responsibility** to students aged 4-19.

## FREEDOM, BOREDOM AND MOTIVATION

by *Stephanie Sarantos, staff member*

At The Clearwater School, students are able to freely choose their activities and pursuits, every day of the year. So it is surprising to hear a student exclaim with loud angst, "School is so boring! There's nothing to do!"

How can students get bored in a school that doesn't have mandatory assignments, preset curriculums or time schedules? Students who transfer to Clearwater from other schools often expect to escape boredom, knowing that they will be able to do exactly those things that interest them most. Instead they may discover that Clearwater students experience boredom of a wholly different kind. Boredom that leads to great results—like self-initiative, self-confidence and the ability to set and accomplish personal goals.

### Boredom in Traditional Schools

In traditional settings boredom is usually linked to a lack of freedom. Students have little choice over how they spend their time. One choice they do have is how to express their boredom. Each individual's style of expression influences how teachers, parents and institutions respond. For example, some students find that school is just uninteresting—subjects may be too dry, too easy or too difficult. Students may act on these feelings by spacing out, drawing, writing or thinking about something else during class. Institutions respond by trying to create more entertaining classes to engage a broad range of students.

Other students find that school doesn't fit their temperament, learning style or personal rhythm. These students usually want to be active when required to sit at desks. They tend to act out, underachieve and become management problems. Institutions tend to label these students as troublemakers or at-risk kids. They may be offered interventions or punished.

*Continued on page 6*



THE SCHOOL BULL

## KUOW TO FEATURE THE CLEARWATER SCHOOL

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 9AM

The Clearwater School will be featured on KUOW's Weekday with Steve Scher on Friday, May 25, 2001 at 9:00am. Tune into 94.9FM to hear Steve interview Clearwater staff and other guests. This will be a tremendous PR opportunity for the school: be sure to spread the word!



MAY 2001

## CHECK OUT THE NEW LOOK!

Now that we have settled into our new digs, we have come up with a brand spankin' new logo! Not to be out done, The Bull decided to change his wardrobe and jazz things up a bit. Hope you enjoy the new threads.

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## ENROLLMENT

It is time to turn in enrollment forms for the 2001-2002 school year! Continuing students receive priority if enrollment forms are received on or before May 15. Contact the staff if you need more information.



### 60 MINUTES

**Sudbury Valley School** was featured on 60 Minutes on Sunday, April 29, 2001. Sudbury Valley School is, of course, the school after which The Clearwater School is modeled. This is good news for us because it is excellent exposure for Sudbury schools in general and is already generating some interest with local media. The school has copies of the program in case you missed it or want to show it to friends or relatives.



### The School Bull

MAY, 2001

*The School Bull* is published on an as needed basis. You have something to go in? Let us know. The core team consists of:

Stephanie Sarantos, Martha Hurwitz and Shawna Lee: Writing and editing  
Bob Freeman: Graphics and layout  
Shawna Lee: Photos

### THE CLEARWATER SCHOOL

(206)306-0060, 11006 34th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98125-6806  
info@clearwaterschool.com  
http://www.clearwaterschool.com

The Clearwater School is Seattle's Sudbury school, offering an educational alternative based on **Trust, Freedom and Responsibility**. It is open to students aged 4-19 and welcomes racial, cultural, and religious diversity, and families of every composition. The Clearwater School is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.

#### Officers of the Board

President	Tom Campbell (acting)
Treasurer	Stephanie Sarantos
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#### Staff

Shawna Lee	Angeliqe McCaffree	Stephanie Sarantos
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## 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CLEARWATER SCHOOL YARD SALE

**COLLECTION: SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2001**

**SALE: SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2001, 9AM-5PM**

Join in the fun for the annual Clearwater School yard sale. We need your donations: furniture, toys, appliances, household goods, garden supplies, etc. Bring your items to school for tagging on Saturday, June 2, 8:00am – 12:00pm. We also need your help tagging and organizing on Saturday or selling on Sunday. Call the school to donate items or to volunteer! 206.306.0060



## WE NEED MORE STAFF!

Staff elections will be held at the end of May. Students and staff vote each spring to choose the staff for the following school year. The school is hoping to hire some additional staff members for 2001-2002. If you are interested in a highly rewarding and challenging job, consider a staff position at The Clearwater School.

The Clearwater School expects staff to:

- Be committed to the Sudbury philosophy
- Be available to students
- Treat others with respect and respect the rules
- Share their skills and interests
- Have patience and a sense of humor
- Listen deeply and ask questions
- Engage in the democratic process
- Examine self in interactions with staff and students
- Keep time commitments
- Be flexible and take initiative
- Be skilled communicators
- Complete various administrative duties

Call (206) 306-0060 or email info@clearwaterschool.com for more information on what the school requires from people who wish to run for staff.

## THANK YOU FROM STEPHANIE AND NICOLAS!

by *Stephanie Sarantos, TCS staff member*

The newest face around The Clearwater School is Nicolas Colin Sarantos Campbell. He was born February 22, 2001 on a beautiful sunny day in our living room. His arrival in our family has been a very deep blessing. I am grateful to the School Meeting for welcoming him to the school and allowing me to continue to staff with my baby.

Several parents volunteered to help out at school as substitutes while I was spending time at home after the birth. I would like to personally thank **Nora Wheat, Annie Aikin, Elizabeth Peckham and Martha Hurwitz**. I appreciated the time at home with Nicolas during his earliest days. The entire school has benefited from your presence and I also extend thanks on behalf of the entire School Meeting. We also enjoyed the company of **Aslin, Arlo, Caitlin and Eli** who accompanied their mothers to school. Thank you for your willingness to give your time and support.



Bob Freeman



Rudyard Cashman

## TIME WELL SPENT

by *Nora Wheat, TCS parent and volunteer*

In October I wondered in quiet what the staffing plans were for Stephanie's maternity leave. I don't work Mondays and thought about volunteering some time. I hesitated, unsure if my help was needed and questioning whether I would be capable and welcome. After plenty of reflection on my potential "staffing" ability, I offered and was quickly accepted. I wouldn't go so far as to call myself "staff" (none of the administrative duties were mine, nor did I serve on JC or even attend a school meeting). However, for the past eight Mondays I've had the experience of being an adult in a democratic school.

One of my favorite activities in my other life as a cooperative preschool teacher is observing. Lucky for me, that skill transfers well to Clearwater. I watched computer, card and board games. I heard conversations, debates, negotiations and limits being set and tested. I smelled experiments in cooking and tea making. I was slow to fully immerse myself in school culture, noticing that my presence alone could clear a seemingly active room. My powers of observation did not go unnoticed and I was questioned as to why I was always "watching". How could I not? The question made me smile. I was fascinated and said so. As adults we are not often privilege to the uncensored thoughts, plans and actions of our school-age children. I witnessed the construction of knowledge and the navigation of difficult social settings, rare opportunities in the larger world. This is "why" I watch.

A more difficult transition to Clearwater was the loss of my inherent adult authority. Aside from one day of pretzel making, I tried to limit my school participation to following the initiative of the students. "Tried" because it did take some effort to walk the line between making myself available as a resource (staff) person and imposing my own ideas. My observations continued as I became more active in routines of the students. In the end, my time was well spent talking and listening, playing soccer, Marco Polo, strategy games, cooking, reading, helping with art projects, building with blocks and Legos, cleaning and much more.

Nicolas is now nine weeks old and he has accompanied Stephanie as she relieved me of my Monday duty. I have a different view of our school than I did three months ago. My understanding of Clearwater has been both validated and modified. I am inspired by my experience and am curious about other roles parents might fill at school. I'm considering a questionnaire that will identify the wants and needs of students and staff as well as the time and resources of the parents. In the meantime, I'm available as a substitute on Mondays!

Want to pursue the idea of parental involvement? Call or email me: Nora Wheat, 206.860.9433, Owlhouse88@hotmail.com

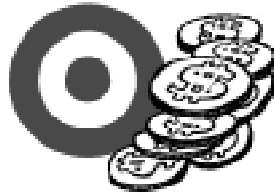
## SAME WEB PLACE, NEW WEB LOOK!

**WWW.CLEARWATERSCHOOL.COM**

Since we now have a logo, we felt it was time to update our web site. You can see it now by going to the usual place. We heap piles of thanks on our webmaster—assembly member David Linder—for the new look, new feel, and new design! Come visit. We hope you will find it easier to get to the information you need.



## TARGET STORE'S TAKE CHARGE OF EDUCATION PROGRAM



The Clearwater School is eligible for Target's School Fundraising program. If you are a Target customer and have a Target Guest Card or are planning to acquire one, you may designate The Clearwater School to receive donations from Target through the School Fundraising program. Target will donate an amount equal to one percent (1%) of credit purchases made at Target stores with your Target Guest Card. You can sign up for the School Fundraising program at any Target store, by calling 1-800-316-6142, or by visiting Target's web site at [www.target.com](http://www.target.com).

## TRUST

*by Alicia Richard, TCS Assembly member and mother of twins*

I trusted my body to birth my twins, and it delivered, literally: my two healthy babies were born without complications in February 1999. Since then, they have learned an incredible amount and have mastered an amazing number of skills, all without attending school, all on their own schedule. They learned to hold their heads up, then roll over, sit up, crawl, stand up, cruise, walk and now run. They've learned to feed themselves and can drink from a cup without spilling. They developed a keen sense of humor very early on. Communication began with different cries and body motions, progressed to grunting and pointing, and now to three- and four-word sentences. These are only the most tangible things that they have learned: it would be impossible to list all the things they have learned about the world and how to relate to it.

All along these last two plus years, I have trusted that my kids would learn all of these things in their own time, and that there was really not much I could do to speed up the process. Most pediatricians these days would tell you the same thing. There is a wide age range (in months) given for when babies "should" achieve certain skills, and it is generally accepted today that they will reach certain "milestones" when they are ready, not before. We trust that babies and toddlers know what they need to learn and when they need to learn it. However, when kids reach the age of five or six, it is generally accepted that they should no longer be trusted with their own lives. They are expected to go to school and be told by others what is important to learn and when it is important to learn it (not to mention when it is permissible to eat and go to the bathroom—things that our bodies give us clear signals for). Why the sudden mistrust? What if you want to continue to trust your child?

The Clearwater School is a place that trusts children to decide what is best for them. Students decide how best to spend their time, which skills are important for them to learn, and how they are going to learn them. In effect, this trust is an extension of the trust their parents had in them when they were babies and toddlers. Just as they did when they were younger, Clearwater students will learn naturally and at their own pace, reflecting the trust their parents have of them by trusting themselves. Ultimately, this may be one of the most valuable legacies of the Clearwater School.



*Maze by Ukiah, TCS student*



## RANDOM THOUGHTS FROM A RANDOM MIND

*By Candace Pidcock, TCS parent*

Since before we came to Clearwater about fourteen months ago, my husband Woody and I have been thinking about the value of alternative education. Joshua was twelve years old when he started here, and we had known for years that his learning style was different from most of his peers. He was easily bored in "traditional" schools (in some ways I think of Clearwater as traditional) and often resisted doing what he was told. He was obviously clever and very motivated when he was interested in a subject, but he just didn't fit the mold.

The questions became more urgent and frequent: Were we doing the right thing by keeping him in his school? Was there an environment better suited to his style of learning? What does Joshua need to be equipped for life? Will Joshua be able to get into college? What about an alternative school that would give him more autonomy? What about a school that would give him total freedom, and responsibility, to become ready for life as an adult? Were we crazy?!

Probably most of these questions are familiar to most of you parents, and you could even add a few of your own. We have struggled for answers to some of these questions and come up with new ones along the way. One thing we knew is that we had to try something different. We looked at many alternatives and decided on Clearwater for several reasons. We like the small size, the casual atmosphere, and the lack of pressure. We appreciate the democratic model by which the school is run. It really impressed us that a student's vote counts as much as a staff person's vote. Now this is something we could get excited about!

More than the above reasons, the idea that children can and, given a chance, will direct their own education, appeals to us. The idea of freedom of choice is important to adults, why not to children? Why limit children's choices and tell them what is important to learn? How many times have each of us wondered why we had to memorize theorems or how to diagram a sentence (or fill in with your own example), knowledge we never needed later in life? How can we presume to know what our children will need later in life? The world is changing so fast; if they become responsible, confident, learn good values and how to be a valuable citizen they will be equipped for whatever world they live in.

This doesn't mean we have found answers to all our questions and that we don't occasionally wonder what we are doing. Just this fall we went through the panic again. Is Clearwater right for Joshua? Are we doing the right thing? Then I imagined Joshua walking into his science class at his old school, and being told that this week the assignment would be to take a computer apart and attempt to put it back together. It is something he could get excited about, but how much different it would feel if he came up with the idea himself. Maybe he and a couple other students would find an unused computer, and take it apart, piece by piece. It would be their initiative, their idea, and they wouldn't be graded for their work. They would be free to come up with their own assessment, if they wanted to.

Do any of you have similar struggles and questions? What answers do you have? Perhaps we can continue this article with a discussion through the e-group. Then our insights can support each other as we travel to the beat of this different drummer.



*Portrait by Claire, TCS student*



## SECOND ANNUAL END OF YEAR SCHOOL PICNIC

**SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2001**

**1:00-5:00PM**

**AT THE SCHOOL**

For the second year, The Clearwater School welcomes everyone—students, staff, families, former and current founders, Assembly members, Advisory Board members and their guests—to attend the annual school picnic. Come celebrate the end of Clearwater's fifth year and our first year in our new site. Enjoy fun, games, stimulating conversation and delicious food. The picnic is a potluck, so bring something to share.



## FREEDOM, BOREDOM & MOTIVATION

*Continued from page 1*

Yet another group of students experience schoolwork as too easy or below their level. They may underachieve, stop working altogether or learn the system and get good grades—without investing themselves personally in their work. Institutions often tend to ignore these students.

### **Boredom at The Clearwater School**

Students at The Clearwater School are not expected to find mandatory activities interesting. They are free to follow their own rhythms throughout the day. Staff members do not make it their business to tell students what is important for them to learn or do or think about. The freedom that defines Sudbury schools leads to other kinds of boredom. For example:

One kind of boredom is, "I know exactly what I want to do, but I am not doing it." This boredom may occur because a friend has not arrived at school yet, materials are not available or the student must wait for a turn.

Sometimes, boredom means, "I do not know what I want to do." Students may enjoy freedom for awhile—intently pursuing activities for days, weeks or months—but often they reach a day when nothing seems to captivate them. They can't quite figure out what to do next. This kind of boredom presents itself as aimless wandering, pacing in circles or sitting in one place watching other students flow in and out of the room. This boredom is like a time of rest—a space that opens and stays empty until the student is struck by the next impulse.

There is another kind of boredom that seems to be a phase of maturation and education. "School is so boring," means: "I am not ready to take responsibility for determining what I do at school, and ultimately with my life." This is a kind of essential boredom. It has nothing to do with how an individual fits with an imposed, external set of expectations or activities. This boredom is much more personal—it expresses the need of each individual to create meaning in one's own life.

At The Clearwater School, boredom is considered a phase of learning. Bored students are not punished or labeled. Staff members do not try to alleviate boredom by offering entertainment or ideas for productive uses of time. If staff offer help, it is to help the student understand and learn from the experience of boredom. Staff may talk with students in order to understand the situation and the student's feelings or to share their own experiences of boredom. Staff may feel uncomfortable themselves, as they watch students experience boredom, but resist the temptation to intervene. Students are left to experience the full extent and accompanying discomfort of their boredom.

### **The Place of Boredom at The Clearwater School**

It is ultimately up to each student to find a way out of boredom—to take responsibility for finding out what to do with his or her life.

Hal Sadofsky is a graduate of Sudbury Valley School and a cofounder of Blue Mountain School in Oregon. In his Blue Mountain School Newsletter article "Entertainment, Boredom and Responsibility," he describes his response to complaints of boredom:

*This is life! It is up to you to chart a course you find interesting and worthwhile. It is ultimately your life and you have to recognize that. This is your life, make what you want of it.*



Taking personal responsibility for all one's actions is one of the hallmarks of a Clearwater education. Hal states:

*The most fundamental educational lesson we hope our students will learn is that they are responsible for their own education, and in fact for their own lives. Actually internalizing this and all that goes with it is the best lesson they can have for the rest of their lives. I believe that it is important for people to acquire knowledge and skills, but I don't believe I can or should force them to do so. Much more important is for our children to learn that if they value something it is worth working for, and that if they have a goal they care about, they need to take responsibility for realizing it.*

Students learn how to take responsibility for their lives through practice. Each time students decide what to do with their time, they are learning what it feels like to take responsibility for the course of their lives. Taking responsibility for personal accomplishments can be wonderfully empowering; taking responsibility for boredom can be painful. Students stuck in boredom have not yet figured out how to take responsibility for determining their next activity in the day—let alone the direction of their lives.

The way out of boredom is by marching through it. Eventually students realize no one else is going to tell them what to do and they begin to think about what's important to them. They find the courage to make decisions based on their interests and the goals they have for their lives. This process can take months, even years. The skills gained from transforming boredom into motivation at school prepare students for their adult lives. They practice the skill of decision making and develop self-initiative and confidence. These characteristics are well worth the investment of time and trust The Clearwater School offers.





## NEWS FROM THE PR COMMITTEE

*TCS PR Committee: Shawna Lee, Alicia Richard, Stephanie Sarantos, David Linder, Martha Hurwitz and Tamara Packer*

On February 8, twenty-five adults and a surprising number of infants visited The Clearwater School for our first Alternative School Forum. The Seattle Holistic Center cosponsored the event. Three different models of alternative schools were presented: Betsy Weill (of Seattle Waldorf and Brightwater Schools) represented Waldorf education, Gail Longo (of Cinquegrannelli) discussed Montessori, and Clearwater staff member Shawna Lee presented the Sudbury model. Audience members asked many questions. Many knew about Waldorf and Montessori, but few seemed to know about either The Clearwater School or the Sudbury model of schooling. Not only did the participants learn all about The Clearwater School, but word about the Sudbury model of education spread to the many thousands of people on the Seattle Holistic Center's mailing list. The PR committee is interested in repeating this event every year.

On April 24, Assembly members munched on decadent desserts at an evening at school while enjoying a discussion with Bruce Smith and Holly Froeschner. Bruce is a staff person at Alpine Valley School in Colorado, and a former staff member at the Independence School in Florida and Liberty Valley School near Chicago. All three are Sudbury schools. He and Holly were making a trip to the Northwest and requested a visit to The Clearwater School. Bruce talked about his experiences at AVS and answered a wide variety of questions from many Assembly members. The PR Committee would like to thank Bruce and Holly for sharing themselves with our Assembly. Come back anytime!

## THANK YOU

The Clearwater School would like to extend a special thank you to Judy Andrews. Judy has provided the school with ongoing legal assistance. We are especially grateful for her help last fall reviewing our lease document.

Thank you also to the many people who continue to donate time, materials and money to the school. Many donors to the remodel were acknowledged in the Fall issue of the newsletter. The following businesses and individuals have also given time, materials and/or money to the school during the 2000-2001 school year:

Anna Hurwitz	Julia Henry
Barbara and Dana Dick	Kim Miller
Bev Crocker	Kirsten and Todd Holmquist
Boeing	Sutherland
Charles Kester	Lael Cohen
Cheryl and Jerry Trowbridge	Maaiké Medina
Cindy Kester	Mary deRosas and Paul Peterhans
Corey Campbell	Natalie and Peter Sarantos
Courtney Hashimoto and Key Bank	Nora Wheat
David Marshak	Renate and Scott Laetans
Dominique Walmsley	Rose and Bill Jones
Elizabeth Peckham	Shawna Lee and Bob Freeman
Greenwood Sudbury School	Stephanie Sarantos and Tom
Gus Cardoso	Campbell
Helen and Sam Freeman	Susan Braun
Holly and Richard Eckert	Terry Crawford
Josephine Jaques Stewart	WRQ

## STUDENTS USED TO POWER SCHOOL

*by Colin Cashman, TCS student*

The Clearwater staff recently bought treadmills, and placed them in the active room supposedly to "allow students to exercise whenever they want to." They also bought small electric generators to attach to the treadmills, and multiple six packs of root beer. They then showed the pop to the students. The staff then told the students that if they ran for a set amount of time (which was "a surprise") they would be awarded a six pack. The students agreed and the staff connected the generators to the treadmills. The students ran for three weeks, and unwittingly produced enough electricity to power California for two years. Of course by the time the students finally stumbled off the treadmills, they were too groggy to remember their six packs of pop.





THE CLEARWATER SCHOOL

**INFORMATION NIGHT**  
**THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2001**  
**6:30-8:30PM**  
**AT THE SCHOOL**

If you would like to know more about the philosophy and daily operation of The Clearwater School, or you know of someone else who might be interested, mark this date on your calendar. We will host one more Information Night before the end of the school year. After a brief presentation explaining the Sudbury philosophy and describing daily life at The Clearwater School, participants will have lots of time to ask questions. Light refreshments will be served and children are welcome. Call or email the school for driving directions.

**PLEASE SEND ME ENROLLMENT  
 INFORMATION**

Send this coupon to **TCS Enrollment Info, 11006 34th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98125-6806**, if you would like information about enrolling your child at The Clearwater School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include information about tuition assistance

**THE CLEARWATER SCHOOL  
 2000-2001 SCHOOL YEAR  
 CALENDAR**

Enrollment forms for next year due, May 15, 2001

Tuition assistance applications due for next year, May 21, 2001

KUOW interview, May 25th, 9:00am

Memorial Day holiday, May 28, 2001

Info Night, May 31, 2001, 6:30-8:30pm

Collect items for yard sale, June 2, 2001

Clearwater School yard sale, June 3, 2001

End of year school picnic, June 16, 2001

Last Day of School, Jun 22, 2001

**TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Each year The Clearwater School receives donations to the tuition assistance fund. This money is used to provide reduced tuition to families based on their financial need. The application period opens May 1, 2001. Priority is given to applications received before May 21, 2001. If you would like to apply please call the staff to request a tuition assistance packet. The Clearwater School tuition assistance funds are granted without discrimination based on race, culture and religion. We welcome diversity and families of every composition.

If you would like to make a donation to the fund, send it to The Clearwater School with a note indicating tuition assistance fund.

The Clearwater School  
 11006 34th Avenue N.E.  
 Seattle, WA 98125-6806

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
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