



ISC Views and Voices

“Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.” - John Dewey

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The Gift of Parenting

by Nicolette Groeneveld

This Halloween, my intake of refined sugar abruptly came to a halt as a blood test confirmed that I am pregnant!



Anyone who has ever asked me about having children knows I had decided I would not have children this lifetime, so the news came as quite a surprise!

Two weekends ago, I was already worried that I was being a bad mother because I was trying to deal with conflicting emotions around being pregnant. My personal world is going to change significantly over the next few months and some of the upcoming changes are still hard for me to wrap my heart around. I cried to my partner, Mark, “What if the baby can feel my turmoil?!!” He tried to reason with me: “You’ve had it set in your mind for al-

most ten years that you wouldn’t be having kids, and you think within a month and a half you should be all settled into the idea?!”

That weepy weekend passed, and my emotional state became more balanced. Despite that, my mind hasn’t stopped spinning; there’s suddenly so much to think about! There are the practical things: my sister sent me an e-mail showing a second-hand car seat for sale, and I realized I don’t know anything about car seats! One of our newest mothers talked to me about diapers, and I realized that’s a whole adventure in itself! My pants started getting tight so I had to go buy maternity pants; but what’s this crazy “bib” on the front of them?!!

Thankfully there are some things I’m very clear about, like having a home water birth and having my child grow up at ISC!

I’m also starting to get more clear on the gift this pregnancy is. I was reflecting recently on what I want to model for my child, what I hope my child learns from me, and what “programming” I hope my child picks up through living with Mark and me. Through this reflection, I realized this is a calling to me to very consciously work at being the “better” me I have long strived to be so that I am, in fact, modeling to my child what I want him/her to learn.

I’m also hearing all our parents’ stories about how their children are constantly teaching them things, how they are constantly having to grow and stretch as people and how their levels of self-awareness affect their relationships with their children.

A parent recently consulted with me about some issues happening at home, and when I offered my suggestions, she said she would take all of them “because you’re the expert!” Bless her for saying that, but oof! I have a feeling the next eighteen years will show me how little I actually know! I may know what works here at the school, but I sure don’t feel that makes me an expert in parenting!

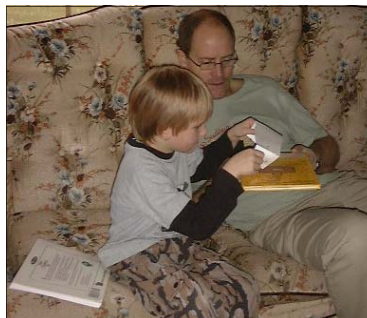
Despite that, I will share in this newsletter some of my experiences around working with youth and some of the learning I’ve done that has facilitated my work with youth. Ric is also offering his insights in an article, and we have some outside input too.

I never plan in advance what the “theme” of a newsletter will be, but if these parenting articles are coming out at this time, perhaps it’s that there will be some gifts for you in what you read.

Merry Christmas and warmest blessings for 2006!

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Bringing the JC Home

by Nicolette Groeneveld

Being pregnant has definitely put a whole new spin on my life! Besides the obvious changes my body is going through, my outer world will change significantly as, in the next few months, I will be selling my house and moving in with my partner, Mark, and his 16-year old daughter, Katie.

Katie is a wonderful, responsible, level-headed teenager, but one who, during my visits to Mark's house, I felt was lacking in the areas of picking up after herself and participating in household duties. Katie has only been living full-time with Mark for a few months, but I could see patterns already developed between them around cleanliness and chores, and I knew Mark was frustrated about this. What to do?

The first thing I made note of to Mark was what seemed really obvious to me: there were no consequences at all to Katie being messy except Mark getting upset with her. And that was the created pattern: Mark would do some cleaning, but as he got more tired, overworked and overwhelmed, his patience would grow thin until finally he snapped and got upset with Katie. He would order her to get something done and she would do it, but she would feel bad because of her dad being angry.

Since Katie had spent a few months at Indigo, I suggested to Mark that he bring the JC home. He thought that might work, and we agreed to bring it up with Katie when it felt right. We also agreed it would be good to have set "rules" around certain things.

I wasn't sure how the "right time" would happen, but the moment beautifully created itself: Mark simply said one evening to Katie: "Nicolette thought it might be a good idea for us to have a JC at home. What do you think?" Katie said, "Yeah, that would probably work." And I said, "Because I see there are some things you and your dad keep getting into arguments about, and I think it could be sorted out quite easily. For

example, your dad really doesn't like the fact that he's always the one doing dishes..." Katie said very matter-of-factly, "Well, that's easy: the person who cooks doesn't clean!" "Great!" I said, "Let's write that down!" I grabbed a piece of paper, and Katie proceeded to create "rules" around all the issues I brought up that I'd seen Mark and her struggling with. Then Mark added a few items that Katie solved too. Then I asked Katie if there was anything she needed for her peace of mind, and she had a few rules for Mark!

We posted the rules on the fridge, and I created a JC write-up form that is posted beneath the rules.

Write-ups happen now, and Katie and Mark deal with them when they have dinner together. I also wrote Mark up, and he me, and we dealt with those when I was over one evening.

Sound simple? It was! Maybe just because Katie is generally a very agreeable person?

Mark commented to me that Katie is pulling her weight now and seems happier and more secure knowing what the expectations are. She is also fully "bought in" because she is basically the one who set up the whole system! She also knows there are specific and relatively immediate consequences when there are problems. Katie feels empowered because she can write up her dad and me just as we can write her up, and there's less tension in the house because problems are dealt with using the simple and objective JC system rather than parent anger and nagging.

I've often heard parents of new students say their children have become disrespectful at home and are pushing previously set boundaries. This is normal! Students start at ISC and feel a new level of freedom and try to push for more freedom at home. Students learn quickly that the freedom ISC offers comes with a lot of expectations around responsibility, and they quickly experience that there are

immediate consequences for not living up to those expectations.

I feel the same is important at home. Parents may have to re-evaluate how boundaries are set and enforced at home, but they definitely want to maintain the boundaries that hold their family together and make it a harmonious community.

Some people think ISC is some kind of free-for-all community where the students run wild, but the truth is our students wouldn't be happy if that were the case. There is security for children in knowing what the expectations and boundaries of their community are, and I know our little ISC community works well because of the predictability and stability of our judicial system.

I'm by no means any kind of expert when it comes to parenting, and I'm sure I'll find out in the next 18 years how little I really do know, but I do have all my ISC experiences with which to approach parenthood; and if there's one thing I've learned about kids and rules, nagging and frustration don't work, but specific and consistent consequences do.

So if you're one of those parents who's saying, "Why is my kid so good at school and so X at home?" maybe look at the systems you have in place at home. If there aren't any, that's likely the problem right there. If you do have systems in place, maybe all they need is to be tweaked a bit. Either way, make sure to involve your children in whatever system you create because, as with Katie, they will surprise you with their wisdom, their practicality and their willingness to create something that works for everyone!



The Gift of Parenting Teens in Peace

by Ric Rosborough

How can we create peace, at home, while parenting ISC teens and younger children?

“Are you sure that *my son/daughter* is respectful, responsible and reasonable at Indigo Sudbury Campus? That is not what I experience at home.”

While parenting two teens of my own (now 19 and 21 years old), and after two and one half decades of working with teens in public and private schools, I have learned a simple method of dealing with teens, which lowers stress and allows them to become more responsible, reasonable, respectful and happy. More importantly, our conversations and interactions become more positive, and the teens feel empowered (power to... rather than power over...). They act more like equals and feel more confident, and I get to experience them, in peace.

Pulling away from mom and dad (and other “authority” figures) is a normal part of teen development but because your children attend ISC, it is, or may be, more pronounced. (They don’t call ISC the “toughest school in the area” for nothing.) Being a student at ISC is difficult, but being the parent of an ISC student (or two or three) is even more challenging. It makes us better parents and better adults or—until we make some fundamental changes to our parenting and adult-child relationships and interactions—it drives us crazy! Regardless of which category you find yourself in, there is hope.

Making poor choices and then living with the consequences is part of what will create a well-functioning future adult (Meaning: we and/or our children can, and will, change, and poor choices have a habit of causing change). The problem seems to come when parents do not want the children to learn “the hard way” and/or the parents do not clearly define the much needed, yet ever changing, parameters with and for the teen. Boundaries are necessary—even for “free” children.

So, what does it take to create peace in the family? If it is healthy for them to start making up their own mind and challenging the authority of the parents (teachers, society, etc.) how do we set up a system of checks and balances to guide

them (safely and as peacefully as possible) into independent adulthood? If parents instinctively react in fear and anger to normal acts of independence, defiance and pulling away, the parents themselves are unwittingly creating the stress they so want to avoid.

In my mind, the first step to peace as parents is to clearly define the parameters or boundaries of our own values, morals, rules and expectations. Many of us have not carefully evaluated our list of personal rules and “shoulds” to ensure that they are truly our choice (rather than our parents’ or society’s choices for us) and what we really want for ourselves and our children.

Assuming the family has set up a philosophical system of operations based on the ISC golden rule of being Respectful, Responsible and Reasonable, and our specific parameters and those of our partner (if we have one) are clearly in mind (and, for many of us, in writing), the next steps to creating peace in the family are:

1. Healthy, mutually agreed upon boundaries.
2. Pre-negotiated consequences (just in case the teen decides to cross the boundary).
3. A simple, non-emotional, non-judgmental, pre-planned statement of fact, to be made by the parent, when the transgression has occurred (or made by the teen if the parents break their pre-negotiated boundary.)
4. Pre-negotiated automatic self implementation of the logical, pre-negotiated consequence.

To negotiate a new boundary, the parents will have to start with a clear head and a neutral emotional state. If we wait until we are calm and ready to deal with the teen rationally, our success rate goes up, and our stress level goes down. This does not mean we do not express our emotions in front of our kids but that we model reasonable and responsible expression of our emotions in front of our kids, and then expect that they do the same when they express in front of us. Set a positive example.

Clearly and calmly communicate what you as the parent need and want along with what you are feeling. The goal here

is to model problem solving, negotiating and respectful, responsible and reasonable communication of how we are feeling – without blaming them. It is critical that the parent listen to what the teen needs and wants and negotiate honestly and openly with the teen. The goal is the mutually agreed upon boundaries, conditions or goals and a mutually agreed upon consequence for any transgression.

Most important of all, how the teen will enforce the consequence, if transgression occurs, needs to be negotiated and mutually agreed upon, prior to the next transgression. If this part of the plan is adequately outlined, there will be no stress for the adult in the next boundary breakage by the teen. At most, the parent simply states the fact of the transgression and then leaves the teen to apply the consequence. For example: “I’m sorry you chose to break our agreement. (“Do you remember the consequence?” is implied by the question and is spoken only if the teen does not show their understanding that this is the time for them to enact the consequence. If this happens, come back to it later when everyone calms down.)

For example: If a teen has a habit of asking for one more time, minute, game, show, commercial, chapter etc., the parent could stop, relax, think, plan, list (in writing if needed) and then discuss the situation with the teen. “This is a list of what is going on how it relates to the past (if that is applicable) and also a list/expression of my feelings that are “up” for me right now because of this situation. What I want for me is...and what I need from you is... because...” Then ask them about their side of the situation and stop and listen to their response. Help them to verbalize their view, their needs and their emotions around the issue. When everyone has spoken about the situation, start to talk about the exact wording of the new boundary,

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the consequence and the teen's responsibility for enforcing the consequence. Once the new situation is agreed upon you may agree to and sign a written agreement (optional).

It may be hard to let the teen fail and it may take some commitment on your part to "hold them to the agreement", but once they have been held accountable for a while, they will get used to being responsible for themselves and become better at making decisions. Eventually they will self monitor and "behave" regardless of your presence. They will learn from their mistakes. The only question is, will you be part of the answer to their teen boundary issues or part of the cause of them?



Quotable Quotes

In my car on the way home, Kris was talking about the phenomenon whereby his mom buys \$200 worth of groceries, but when he looks in the fridge, there still appears to be nothing to eat. Said Gaian, "At my house, all we have is the raw ingredients for making meals. There's a bow and arrow on the wall and a sign pointing to the ravine that says, 'Go find your food there!'"

More from Gaian... In the car we were talking about possible names for my baby. Said Gaian, "Do your kid a favor and don't name it Cindy with an X-q-j-r-p or, you know, spelled with a capital 7! It's so mean when parents do that to their kids!"

At Campus Meeting, Ric raised a point of discussion around appropriate sexual discussions and actions. The ensuing discussion showed that there is no real reason for concern around the issue, but despite that, the discussion kept going around in circles. Finally, 8-year old Kassie said, "I really want to know what Ric's point is, or what anyone is trying to say! Why are we talking about this?"

(So brilliant!)

Comments that "Clicked"

by Nicolette Groeneveld

In November, I received an e-mail recommending a book called *Transforming the Difficult Child* by Howard Glasser and Jennifer Easley. I debated whether or not to get the book, as our students are generally very easy to work with, but I thought, 'There's always more to learn.' What a worthwhile purchase!

One of the first things in the book that jumped out at me is the authors' comment that parents are a child's favorite "toy". The authors state that despite all the fancy electronics out there today, kids still like their interactions with their parents best. Kids like when their parents pay attention to them, notice them, get excited about the things they do. But the fascinating thing is that if kids can't get their parents to pay attention to them, notice them and get excited about what they do for *positive* reasons, they *will* find ways to get them to do it for *negative* reasons (hence the infamous "button pushing".)

The idea that some kids seek negative attention is not new, but this was the first time it really clicked for me *why* kids do it. Negative attention is better than no attention, and if the only way to get mom or dad to pay attention or get excited about something is because a child has done something "wrong", then that grows into the child's default attention-getting mechanism. It's the child's way of saying, "Hello? I'm over here! **Notice me!**"

The first recommendation the book gives to counter a child's negative attention seeking patterns is the next thing in the book that really jumped out at me. The authors suggest parents go out of their way to notice positive things the child is doing and *comment* on them. That seems like a no-brainer too, but really, how often do we adults say something to a child that makes clear that we *see* them, that we are noticing what they are doing, maybe even that we are tickled by what they're doing? The authors point out that parents always notice when a child is doing something wrong and jump in to correct him/her, but how often do we consciously jump to say, "I see you're making the puzzle you got for your birthday. You are concentrating very hard!" or "You look very pleased with the level you've attained in that video game!"

As I reflected on this suggestion to notice kids doing things right, I realized I

felt very "not noticed" as I was growing up. I was a "good kid" who aimed to please so there wasn't much reason for my parents to get mad at me for things. But I didn't get noticed much for good things either—at least not in a *verbal* way or one that really made me *feel* like my parents were *seeing* and appreciating me.

And I think that's how it may be with many of the good kids out there. They just do what they do and since they are so "easy", parents just go about their lives knowing they sure love their kids but maybe not expressing their appreciation for all the "good" things their kids are constantly doing. I can certainly see the value in regularly making **objective** statements about what a child is doing in any given moment just so the child hears the adult say "I *see* you! I appreciate you! I love you!" I am starting to practice that at the school.

There is a second thing around the positive comments that really makes sense to me. The authors of *Transforming the Difficult Child* comment that parents most often try to teach their child how to do something right at precisely the moment they're doing it wrong! A child leaves a mess in the kitchen, and the parent gets angry and says, "Why can't you be more responsible?" The child definitely needs to take care of his/her mess and if this is an ongoing problem, maybe there needs to be a set consequence in place for messes, but that can all be done without an overreaction on the parent's part. And then in the future, the parent can say, for example, "I see you are putting your boots on the rack. I appreciate that you're being responsible." or "You are putting your dishes in the dishwasher. Thank you for being responsible." What better way for a child to learn what it means to be responsible? And what better affirmation to the child that s/he is capable of it?

Transforming the Difficult Child has many more good things to say, and I recommend it even if you don't have a difficult child. Even if you only read the first few chapters and get the extra detail on what I've summarized above, it will have been worth your twenty-or-so dollars.

Listening Really Is An Art

by Nicolette Groeneveld

Last November, a higher part of me decided it was time for me to learn to listen. The process began when Ric returned from a conference with information on the 12 communication roadblocks. When I first read them, I reacted defensively, thinking, “Well sheesh, if all these responses stop communication, a person should just not say anything!” Almost right!

From there, I ended up in a communication course with Lori Runzer of *A New Day Begins*. Nothing in the course was rocket science and it actually wasn’t even new to me, but for some reason, I was ready and the information “landed”. I began to practice the listening skills I had learned and noticed how effective they really are.

This year, I took two workshops where almost all the time was spent answering questions back and forth in dyads (with a partner). The partner asked the given question and the other person responded, and while the person was responding, the partner remained completely quiet and neutral, not even making facial expressions. The only things the partner could say was “Clarify that” “Summarize that” or “Say it again”. For the rest, the partner’s job was just to receive the sharing partner.

It would seem that would have been easy, but I ended up in situations where my partner could not refrain from commenting on what I had shared (which felt like a violation), and I had other partners who failed to maintain eye contact, looked around or were otherwise obviously distracted. It was amazing how “unreceived” I felt in those instances and how my desire to communicate completely shut down.

The combination of the above three experiences, along with observing all the people around me and the effects of their listening skills on others, has really proven to me the value of learning to listen.

In general, what I witness is that most of us adults—especially when dealing with youth—talk too much and listen too little. We are quick to offer suggestions and solutions, and too often our best intentions turn into the longest of lectures. Observing the body language of

the youth we are dealing with, it is very obvious they have shut down and are not taking in any of what we are saying. Turn things around, however, so the youth have the floor in an open, supported way, and they will not only talk our ears off, they will find their own answers.

As I mentioned, I’ve been consciously practicing listening. I want to point out the obvious—that I am by no means perfect at this and still slip often, but the following two simple things are what I try consistently to do:

- 1) When a student comes to talk to me, I stop what I’m doing, turn to face him/her, look straight into his/her eyes and give him/her my undivided attention. If I’m so lost in what I’m doing that I can’t do that, I take a moment to tell the student I’d love to hear what s/he has to share, but I can’t focus 100% right now, so could I catch up with the student later?
- 2) I avoid asking questions or giving my opinion, but rather offer back to the student, in a simple, objective statement, what I have heard him/her say. For example, if a student comes running to me and says, “Yeah! I just beat level 12 of my game!” I might say, “You’re really excited and are happy to be doing well!” If a student comes to show me a picture s/he has painted, I might say, “You are really happy with your picture!” If the student asks what I think of his/her picture, I’ll tell him/her, but I wait to be asked.

When I first started practicing this way of listening, it felt impersonal and awkward. However, what I’ve been shown is that it really does stimulate conversation. An 8-year old student once sat and talked to me for 50 minutes about his video game, and through the whole conversation, all I did was repeat back to him in my own words—and at what seemed the right moments—what he was telling me. I’ve also practiced this in mediations and especially when students come to me upset about something. The fact that students continue to come talk to me about things tells me I must be doing something right. And helping students come to their own answers by mostly keeping my own mouth shut is actually very rewarding!

If you’ve ever shared something with a friend or family member and walked away from the conversation feeling deflated and unreceived rather than uplifted and heard, you will know how it feels when the person you’re sharing with doesn’t know how to listen well. Maybe pay attention to yourself in the next little while and check in on how well you listen. It is such a gift to others to learn to listen well! And with the students we have here at ISC, it reinforces what we try to tell them by having them at the school: “We trust you—you have the innate wisdom find your own answers and carve your own path.”



In the Face of Uncertainty

by Lisa Montanus of Hudson Valley Sudbury School

I am writing this article with some resignation, as I know too well how words are quickly forgotten in the midst of experience. It seems almost pointless; yet another article extolling the incredible and unique opportunity a Sudbury education has to offer. To be expected, right? However, I think this is important because over the last few months it has come to my attention that some students and some parents have become disenchanted with the school. This is no surprise; it happens in a Sudbury School. It is a documented fact that students go through distinct stages while at a Sudbury school.

Stage one is easy; the first few weeks and months of a child's experience are exhilarating not only to the child but also to the parents. Parents love to see the renewed passion, enthusiasm, willingness to be held accountable and *the desire to be at school rather than out of school*. This is a big deal – a very big deal. The process begins as early as the interview. As the Enrollment Clerk, I have the honor and privilege of meeting with potential students and their families at the beginning of this new adventure. I love to see the look of hope and relief as parents begin to understand the rare opportunity provided by the school. The family most often enrolls after the interview and visiting week – everything seems ripe with potential – what could possibly be better? The challenge that is inherent in the philosophy of the school has not yet presented itself. This is the first stage, like any challenge it is initially exciting: we see the possibilities, we are not tired, afraid or doubting our commitment. This stage can last for a long while – weeks, perhaps months.

But then it happens. The inevitable shift. The honeymoon is over. Excitement turns into boredom; taking responsibility for one's learning becomes daunting and frightening rather than the healthy and necessary challenge it's meant to be. This can happen at any age; young students as well as older ones can experience this. This is when it is hard to be at the school. We start hear-

ing comments like; “nothing happens at the school”, “you can't learn anything at this school”, “it's boring”, “it's a school for losers”. Students in this stage will start to be absent. When they are in school, they are listless, complain, and often try to enroll other students into agreeing with them that the school sucks.

This is the time when students need the support of their families the most. However, it can be the hardest time for parents to support their children as their own fears and insecurities about the philosophy are often triggered. Some parents will start to take actions that undermine their children's success at the school. With younger students, undermining might take the form of sending workbooks in with the child with the expectation that they complete so many lessons during the day. With older students it might take the form of suggesting a course of action – a loose curriculum, including classes. It might also take the form of parents signing their children up for classes after school; hence promoting the idea that the school is good for social skills but that “real” learning happens somewhere else. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is when theory gets put into practice – this **is** when the “real” education starts to happen and it is *completely different from the education that takes place within any other contemporary model of education*. This is the time that students learn to think for themselves, trust themselves, accept themselves. It is often not pretty. It is, however, real. It is also the most important and difficult lesson of a Sudbury school. Once a person learns to trust him or herself, they are unstoppable, they can do anything they want, they can learn any subject they want or need. At a Sudbury school academics are not the primary focus. Once students learn to trust and think for themselves the academics fall into place. Other schools focus on the academics often at the cost of a student's self esteem. The goal of most educational models doesn't go deeper than how well the students have learned a subject and the grades they have received, setting up a

debilitating life long pattern of looking for external approval. Very little attention, if any, is paid to the student's character or in helping them to develop the skills necessary to make choices that significantly affect their lives.

As students are faced with themselves in the Sudbury environment they slowly learn to appreciate themselves. They learn how to make choices that are best for themselves and the community. The fear and resignation that existed before transforms into confidence and action. Students no longer see themselves as isolated but as active participants in a vital community. This is final stage and the goal of a Sudbury education. This transformation is short circuited when pressure to conform and perform is placed on a student. I notice a marked change in a student's demeanor when this interference occurs. They go from looking relaxed and engaged to looking anxious and preoccupied. This saddens me because this is the antithesis of the school's design. When children are told that what they are doing at school isn't right or isn't sufficient and they should be doing something else, they are given the message that they can't be trusted and the school can't be trusted. They are robbed of the gift offered by a Sudbury school: the gift of time and space to find out who they are as people.

As parents the best way you can support your child(ren) while at a Sudbury school is not to interfere with the process. This can be daunting. Very little in our lives supports this radical form of education. I wish I could offer an easy solution to allay parent's fears. I can't. When fears surface look to your child: do you notice a difference; are they engaged; are they maturing? The purpose of our monthly Sudbury Philosophy discussions is to provide a way to support parents and students when the doubt and questions start to arise.

I have great respect for parents who are courageous enough to send their child (ren) to our school. It takes tremendous trust and I acknowledge all of you.



A Beautiful Human 'Being' Community

by Nathalie Jackson—ISC Parent and Holistic Practitioner

I was recently undergoing some recurring moments of fear about sending Liam to this school. On the days he seemed to be 'doing something,' my fear was lifted somewhat. He would come home with a picture or a schematic of something he wanted to build or a game he had invented, and in those moments, I felt he was truly in the right place at the right time. And then there were the 'other' days. The days Liam spent watching other children playing video games. The days when, in response to my question, "What did you do today?" I would receive an, "Oh, nothing" answer. "NOTHING?" my mind would be screaming inside. Why would I be sending my son to a private school to DO NOTHING???

This pattern was being repeated in our family until I participated in an enlightening conversation with Ric and Tim just recently. I realized, as I walked out of the school that day, that the teachers here also assume the role of spiritual counselors at times, and how grateful I am for their compassionate and patient attitude towards my less-than-graceful moments as a parent.

My husband and I have been on the receiving end of some comments from other family members lately that have caused us to take a closer look at our choice of education for our children. Are they receiving enough of a 'base' to springboard them into their life purpose? How will their lives be affected if they choose never to learn math? Ric and Tim were very reassuring of the fact that my son's 'education' may, in fact, be quite intangible. He may not have anything to show for it in terms of hard physical evidence. Yes, he can count, but what about world history or geography???

And seeing as he has not participated in the conventional learning system before, how do I know he's really learning to interact better, or be more responsible?

Then Ric brought some valuable insights to my attention. Liam may not truly find his life purpose until he's much older but in the meantime, he is allowed just to 'be.' He's given full permission to live life without restraints nor limitations. He is in an environment of pure, unadulterated 'beingness.' I've strived for myself over the past two years to create a work environment that gives me this freedom, and I see now that these children will always 'know' that freedom is attainable, if not *expected* out of life. They are co-creating a new society, a new way of living, and I get to sit back and watch it all unfold...lucky me!!!

There was one other piece that truly resonated with me that eventful day. Tim made a small remark that was so profound I'm *still* digesting it. He said (paraphrased) that we are truly trusting in the community as a whole when we send our children here. There may be one child out of all the children who is or will ever be a member of the ISC family who has a spark, a dream, a vision, that ends up changing the world as we know it. And by choosing to send my children to this school, I'm taking the emphasis off 'me' and 'my children' and focusing on the 'we' of community. Liam, in some small way, may be one of the people who ignites this spark in another—this spark that may grow and someday change the world. And how do I contribute? I just trust. I trust that 'being' is better than 'doing.' And that his 'being' at this place, at this time, is exactly perfect.

And so it is.

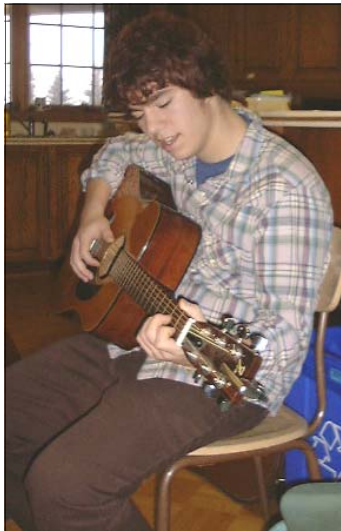
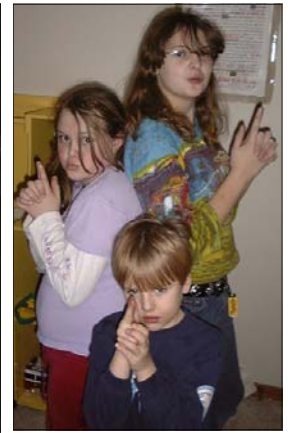
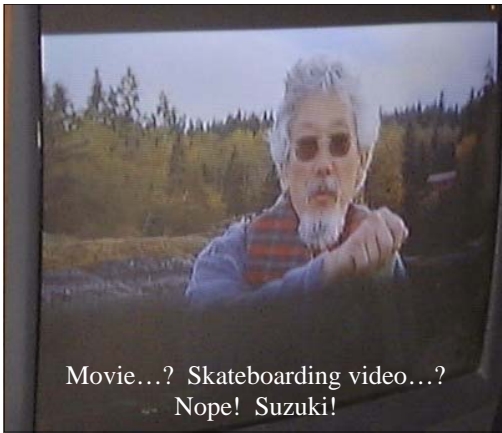


Announcements

- Parents, please put your family name or initials on all Tupperware containers. Any unmarked containers will be recycled once/week.
- If anyone knows of any books or papers exploring what children learn from playing "pretend", please let Nicolette know. Watching the kids at school, I've become extremely curious about what kids actually get from that kind of play!

Prepared by Nicolette Groeneveld





Wishing you a very
Merry Christmas
and a
wonderful 2006!

