



PLURALISTIC SCHOOL ONE

Winter 2014

PERISCOPE

The
Pluralistic
Student
Issue



Rooftop Garden

Students in all grades are working busily in the rooftop garden this year. In Art, students used the garden to study lines, make collages, and even taste the leaves. Middles students measured, sketched, and painted plants. Younger students discovered that vegetables like peas, broccoli, and carrots should be planted this season. These projects and many more tie together the school-wide study of life sciences, utilizing the garden as a living laboratory for the study of the natural world!

In This Issue:

PAGE 1
Head's Column

PAGES 2-3
Traditions Old and New

PAGE 4-7
Pluralistic Connections

PAGES 8-9
Alumni Corner

BACK COVER
Save The Date!
PS1 in the News

THE PERISCOPE
Volume 24, Number 1

Editors:
Amanda Perla
Deirdre Gainor

Designer:
David Mellen Design

PS1
1225 Broadway
Santa Monica CA 90404
(310) 394-1313
(310) 395-1093 fax

To learn more about our
school, visit our website
www.psone.org

Happy New Year!

**“The meaning of life is to find your gift.
The purpose of life is to give it away.”**

-Pablo Picasso

In this season of giving, PS1 gives thanks to you for being part of our school community. Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!

At PS1, we recognize that every child is unique, so we built a school that nurtures individual talents and learning styles. That's how children become the best version of themselves, in a school where fitting in is about being yourself. PS1 Philosophy Statement

A pluralistic school student is inherently not different from another child. The difference is that a PS1 student is acknowledged for who he is, for what he does, for what he feels, for what he sees and hears, and for how he demonstrates his care for others. These traits exist for all children. They lie in wait for us to help uncover them so that every child can demonstrate and exude his self-pride. This is pluralism.

Adults, whether parents or teachers, often feel that their first obligation is to impart knowledge to a child. Children get so much guidance and direction from their parents in their early years. Once a child turns five, I feel that our first obligation is to learn how to observe and to listen to a child. As adults in a pluralistic school, we help children become the best version of themselves when we realize that we have as much to learn from them as they do from us. Awe and respect for children, and encouraging their sense of wonder, are cornerstones of a pluralistic education. A child who is comfortable, safe, inspired, and connected in his school setting builds on his natural love of learning, is open to new ideas, and wants to contribute back to his friends, his classroom, and his community. It's really that simple.

Think about this quote for a minute: *A Child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. If a child is to keep alive his INBORN SENSE OF WONDER without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in... I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to know as to feel...*

IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THE CHILD TO WANT TO KNOW THAN TO PUT HIM ON A DIET OF FACTS HE IS NOT READY TO ASSIMILATE.

-Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*



PS1 recognizes that elementary school is the engagement phase in life. Engagement happens when teachers realize that to teach is to listen. Performance and achievement are the second phase; fulfillment and success are the third. Bunching all three phases altogether in a young person's life simultaneously – “putting children on a diet of facts he is not ready to assimilate” during the elementary school years – is what leads to burnout, boredom, and being distressed in later years as a student and as an adult. This is why the elementary school years are so important.

PS1 is a place where that companionship between adult and child can be found. The PS1 student is the one who:

- Bounces happily into school every day;
- Is a leader of her sports team outside of school both in performance and attitude;
- Cares for a younger child on the schoolyard;
- Goes to school in an environment filled with kindness, awareness, and respect from other students, teachers, and parents;
- Pursues his dream and learns new things leading to a new discovery, a deeper knowledge, and a world unknown;
- Is comfortable wearing a costume to school or telling her whole class and her teachers about an embarrassing moment;
- Sees and feels and breathes the connection between life and school;
- Can't wait for summer to end to be able to go to school every day;

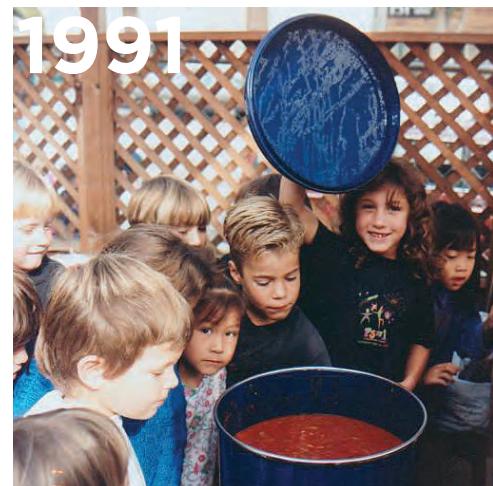
- Catches other kids doing something right;
- Takes his competence, confidence, and connection everywhere she goes;
- Has too many ideas to choose from as her entry into the Invention Convention;
- Pulls ten books off library shelves on a favorite topic even though it means that his backpack is too heavy;
- Is a critical thinker who asks a question of a middle school teacher to encourage seeing things from different perspectives;
- Asks for more work in middle and high school than is required for getting a good grade;
- Recognizes that everyone is good at some things and not as good at others; and
- Is likely to say: “Yes I can!”; “I am some body!”; and “Let me help you”.

Why is this true? In great measure, it has to do with the philosophy of pluralism where the guiding force is that “Fitting in is about being yourself.” Rachel Carson writes about children needing that one special companion. I am so proud that so many of our children have more than one companion, including the key adults that work at their school, because every child deserves a champion. And, in our non-competitive environment, everyone is a champion! This is pluralism.

-Joel Pelcyger



2013



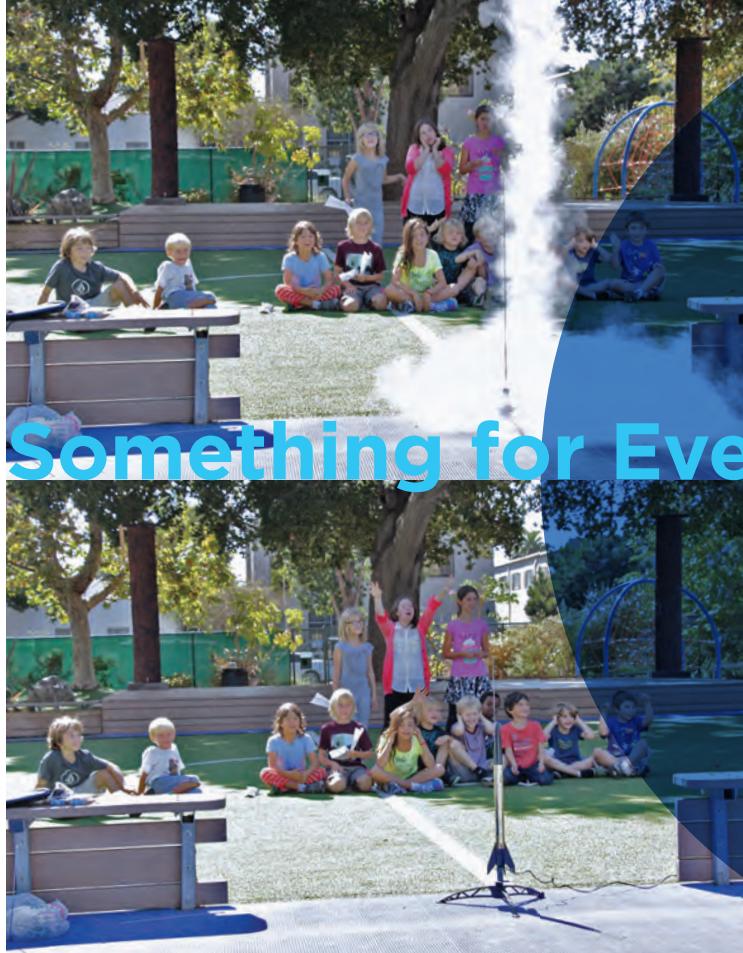
1991

Food for Thought

When PS1 was a smaller school, the students and teachers cooked a traditional Thanksgiving meal in the kitchen of the little house inherited in 1975. Students made paper pilgrim hats, sang songs together, and wrote poems of gratitude. The community came together to share the meal on the day before Thanksgiving. This photo of a past Thanksgiving celebration comes from the PS1 Archives.

For several years now, students have prepared meals for Step Up On Second whose mission is "dedicated to long-term support of people in recovery and their families." After students assemble to see the dishes that each class made, representatives from SUOS join our Thanksgiving Circle to speak to our students about where their contributions will go and how the work of SUOS benefits our neighborhood. Together we sing, read poetry, and share our gratitude for the good fortune we enjoy in this wonderful community.

Traditions



Something for Everyone

The Clubs Program, a favorite PS1 tradition, continued this fall with opportunities for every student to explore, create, and connect with students of all ages. Lego Master Builders, Flying Machines, Kids Can Cook, Fun with Fabric, and Student Council were a few of the 18 groups.

The Explore Santa Monica Club was a new addition this year and sought to connect PS1 students with the local neighborhood. Field trips to nearby business and non-profit organizations, such as The Red Cross, cultivated students' sense of community awareness, citizenship, and stewardship.

Life after PS1...

PS1 Alumni Quotes:

This year's PS1 Parent Education meeting about "Life After PS1" featured nineteen of our poised, funny, sincere, capable, relaxed, articulate, and deep thinking alumni students. The audience listened intently as students offered their perspectives about the powerful foundation they received at PS1 and the experiences they had transitioning to new schools.

Representing our alumni in brilliant fashion were the following PS1 grads, now in 9th through 12th grade:

Coltrane Marcus and Louis Waldman, Brentwood

Tia Greenfield and Rudy Frayre, Crossroads

Kelly Riopelle, Rachel Seplow, Sam Clement, and Angela Knight, Harvard-Westlake

Makai Andrews, Pacifica

Emily Surloff, Marie Line, Reece Robinov, and Rita Pisegna, Windward

Gavin Abraham, Palisades Charter

Alana Champion and Mason Allport, Wildwood

Trevor Nevell, SAMO High

Ivey Burns, La Reina

Asa Germann, Areté Prep

It is important to stay close to the people that you grew up with. I am still in contact with most of my friends from PS1 which is a really good feeling to have; it's like family. -Alana

Once you choose a [middle] school it can become whatever you want it to—because you have all the tools and you just have to know how to use them. Whatever you make of the school is what it is going to be. -Emily

PS1 taught me to build relationships with teachers. That's one of the things that's helped me most today. It's a skill that I treasure so much. -Tia

I hope that the everyday love of learning that everyone at PS1 has never changes. That's what PS1 instilled in me; I loved coming to school every day. -Rachel

Transitioning to middle school was fairly easy for me because of all the skills I was taught at PS1, especially how to interact with new people and teachers. -Trevor

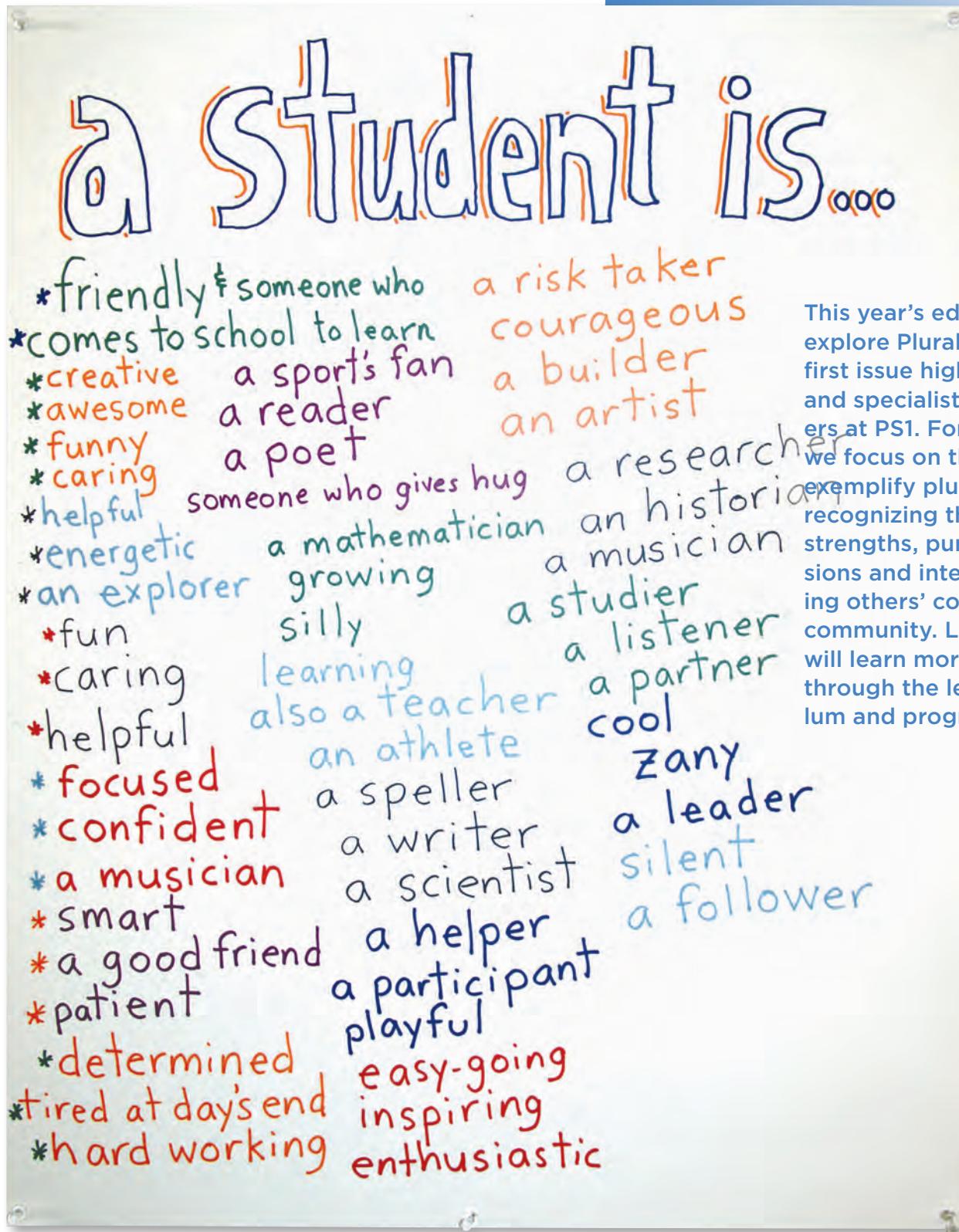
One of the great things about having been at PS1 is that you get to focus on yourself as an individual. In the middle school admissions process I learned to search for the best place for me. -Angela



"What are the qualities of a Pluralistic School student?"

Pluralistic

Students in JL were asked the question, see their responses below!



This year's editions of Periscope explore Pluralism in action. The first issue highlighted teachers and specialists—the sensemakers at PS1. For the second issue, we focus on the students who exemplify pluralism each day—recognizing their individual strengths, pursuing their passions and interests, and valuing others' contributions to the community. Later in the year we will learn more about Pluralism through the lens of the curriculum and program.

Connections

2



AJY

A pluralistic school student...
identifies his or her feelings and the feelings of others to problem solve, develop empathy and take another's perspective. Alia and Jen's Youngers students share the triggers that "heat them up" on their emotional thermometers and also their own unique ways for "cooling down." By reflecting and sharing our triggers and calming strategies with one another, we find ways to best support one another and be caring members of our class community.



LJ

A pluralistic school student...
is on a unique journey of self-discovery and relationship building. Lucia and Jayme's Youngers students develop and lead their own activity centers. This offers them the opportunity to discover and explore personal passions and to develop leadership skills, while providing learning opportunities for others. Examining rock collections, making Pokemon and baseball cards, creating book marks, exploring science and teaching the dreidel game are among the many favorite centers that students have led this year.



BS

A pluralistic school student...
recognizes and appreciates the ways in which families celebrate. Bonnie and Shannon's Youngers students realize that although our celebrations may look different, there is a common thread that weaves them together such as, gathering with people we love, eating delicious food, dressing in special clothing and using song and dance to enhance the festivities. A pluralistic school student ... understands the universal connections people share when they celebrate.



BK

A pluralistic school student...
invites everybody, includes others, makes new friends and has fun, has his or her own imagination, tries new things, thinks in different ways, takes care of others, is open to new and different ideas, accepts that everybody's different, and is a creative individual open to the world... Being different is accepted by everyone at PS1.

In Billy and Kitaka's Bridge class, all of these qualities were evident during creation of a shelter made only from what nature provides.

Bridge



AJB

A pluralistic school student...
experiences learning outside the four walls of the classroom. Learning about adaptation from the docent at the Malibu Lagoon reinforced concepts taught in class and provided a hands-on learning experience for children.

Stewardship and environmental awareness are part of the consciousness of a pluralistic student. Students in Abbie and Judy's Bridge class learn ways to take care of the earth. We recycle lunch waste into our flourishing worm bin. The rich worm

casting soil went into our container veggie garden and it's only just begun!

We became anthropologists during our study of the local indigenous peoples. Learning about cultures different from one's own builds an acceptance and appreciation for differences. In doing so, we form a stronger understanding and respect for all people.



Middles

JL

A pluralistic school student... is enthusiastic! In a pluralistic classroom the opportunity to work cooperatively on dynamic projects is essential. A pluralistic school student's ... ideas and contributions lead to collective success and learning. This was demonstrated in John and Louise's Middles class when students worked in groups of four to six to create large scale maps on desktops showing where the Tongva Indians and their neighbors settled in what is now the Los Angeles area. From the class atelier, the mapmakers selected materials that they felt would best represent the geography of the region. The decision making, problem solving and execution illustrated the very definition of enthusiasm.



HJ

A pluralistic school student... is one who uses the community as a classroom. It came to the attention of Holly and Jennine's Middles class one morning that there was a strike going on at UCLA hospital just a few blocks away. Some children had seen it on their way to school. With one student whose mom has an office at the hospital and one student who had an appointment there that afternoon, we made predictions about what was happening and why. The students mentioned other strikes that they knew about, including the grape workers strike of the 1960's and more recently the Writers Guild strike. With writers' notebooks and pencils in hand, students had the opportunity to ask questions of both a striking worker and a union representative about the purpose of the strike and its impact on our local community. Walking through the picket line was a moment some children expressed they would never forget.



Library

A pluralistic school student... has a unique experience with books. During Library Time with Christina, we may share the same stories, but the story speaks to our own hearts in many ways. In the Library, students may happen across a book they love and might read it and check it out many times. Others, not so much. We may share interests in common — The Fairy Realm, Harry Potter, or Tintin... but surely, all of our paths are lined with many different books — demonstrating pluralism in action!



Olders

A pluralistic school student...

- ... arrives at school early and with an inquisitive and excited demeanor.
- ... makes the most of each and every lesson or activity in the classroom, in the art room, the music room, the library, and on the field.
- ... has friends of all ages on our campus, and a few adults as well.
- ... uses a variety of tools to solve problems, seek information, offer solutions, and share visions and ideas.
- ... is engaged, inspired, attentive, tenacious, determined, hilarious, empathetic, and absolutely him or herself.
- ... can write and think and add and subtract and play and sing and do so much more.
- ... is confident, competent, connected, and, above all, happy.



Music

A pluralistic school student...

learns through sharing. Olders students arrive at Kirstina's music class with a "music share," playing a favorite song (on an instrument or a recording) for the class. As classmates learn about and appreciate their peer's selections, they listen for specific music elements and take notes on what they hear in the song. The student presenter then facilitates a short class discussion about the song. Through the "music share" program, we learn about and appreciate each other AND music.



Art

A pluralistic school student...

is taught positive thinking and, as a result, feels comfortable trying out new art techniques. Here we embrace expressions such as, "I tried even though it was hard," "I can do this," and "I like my art work."

In every piece of art created at PS1, you can see that each child is unique, and his or her art style is both respected and celebrated. For example, the theme of the project might be families and togetherness, but the art is still both individual and unique. A pluralistic school student... works outside the box!

When we celebrate so many different styles of art, we build a strong foundation for each student. It is when students are permitted to have fun and simply be themselves that they thrive. The results can be seen in the amazing artwork produced in Lina's art class at PS1.



PE

A pluralistic school student...

enjoys the experience of noncompetitive play with students of different ages, grades, and abilities. Through a variety of games, activities, adapted sports, and exercises, students in P.E. classes find that individual fitness is a personalized goal. Teamwork is emphasized. As the photo reveals, it takes many sets of hands to complete one of P.E. Specialist Pedro's challenging physical puzzles.

The PS1 Alumni Association



AlumniCorner

We try to include as many Alumni updates as space allows. If you were not included in this column, and you sent us an update, please look for your feature in an upcoming issue. We love hearing your news!

Then & Now...



Elijah 2006



Elijah Cuffee, 2001-2007

Elijah was awarded a basketball scholarship to Grandview University in Des Moines, Iowa. We recently learned that he is California ranked with an endorsement from a renowned basketball writer of the US Basketball Writers Association Hall of Fame. He hopes to eventually transfer to play in Division I. His motto: "The road to success isn't always a straight path."



Alissa with
Makai Andrews 2008



Alissa Rodriguez, 2005-2010

Alissa celebrated her Quinceañera at the end of August in a church filled with friends, family and beautiful music. PS1 staff and alumni were present at both the church ceremony and the party later that day, about which she wrote, "I was very happy to see all of you from PS1 once again. I'm so blessed to have met such wonderful people like yourselves."

"When people ask me what the most important thing I learned in school is I say, 'a love of learning.' I really mean it and it all started at PS1."



Andrew with Brandon Bogajewicz and Justin Harris 1994



Andrew Rosenfeld, 1987-1994

Andrew lives in New York and works as a managing director for the Meritage Group, an investment firm based in San Francisco. On October 5th, he and Emilie Keldie married in Bedford, N.Y.

Andrew says, "When people ask me what the most important thing I learned in school is I say, 'a love of learning.' I really mean it and it all started at PS1."

"PS1 definitely helped set the foundation for my adult life.

...PS1 taught me to think independently, to always approach life from multiple angles, and, most importantly, to ask 'why?'"



Jasper 2003



Jasper Pakshong, 1999–2006

Jasper is a second year student at St. Andrews University in Scotland. This summer he had an opportunity to travel to Rwanda and he reports: "...in Nyamagabe we worked with Congolese refugees at Camp Kigeme teaching English, geography, history, and science to a group of about 50 students. We also did some work in the office with database training and helped set up a refugee camp, which was eye opening to say the least."

When asked to reflect on his PS1 experience, Jasper said, "PS1 definitely helped set the foundation for my adult life. The small, very involved community is something that has really stuck with me and has helped shape my educational choices. I believe, more than anything, PS1 taught me to think independently, to always approach life from multiple angles, and, most importantly, to ask 'why?'. With the help of some outstanding, hopefully lifelong, friends and influential teachers, PS1 set a few base qualities in my character to prepare me socially and educationally for anything that came my way. I know that the experience it presented to me was a blessing and has inspired me to search for as many other unique opportunities as possible. This curiosity to seek out the unfamiliar has inevitably led me to far away places where I can utilize these lessons and experience different ways of viewing the world."



Susannah 1987



Susannah Broyles, 1987–1991

Susannah received her BA in Religious Studies and history at Montana State University in Bozeman and got her MSIS degree at Pratt Institute in 2009. She is now working as the Metadata Creator for the Museum of the City of New York.

"I was taught that creativity was just as much a part of learning as math and science and it became a foundational truth that has set me up for great success."



Jasmine 1993



Jasmine (Molina) Dean, 1989–1993

Jasmine and her husband Jeremy met while doing relief work, and eventually founded Live Your Love™ in 2008. Founded on the principle that "small changes in daily activities can make a big difference," Live Your Love sells tea sourced from Sri Lanka, the country where the Deans lived after the 2004 tsunami. Since its inception, Live Your Love has partnered with Smile International (www.smileinternational.org) to give back to the people of Sri Lanka who were devastated by the Tsunami.

Jasmine and Jeremy recently launched an Indiegogo campaign to raise \$10,000 for Live Your Love. Jasmine explains, "We are going to give every dollar of profit to the school that my husband and I have partnered with in Sri Lanka.

For more information about Live Your Love or the organization's Indiegogo campaign, please contact Jasmine Dean at: jasmine@liveyourlove.com or visit <http://liveyourlove.com/>.

When asked to reflect on her PS1 experience, Jasmine said, "The words that keep coming to mind are: leadership, creativity and exploration. Looking back, I realize that I never felt confined to any kind of learning style. I used to hate reading but I never felt inept because the areas that I excelled in, like math and poetry, were cultivated in a way that made me feel successful. I was taught that creativity was just as much a part of learning as math and science and it became a foundational truth that has set me up for great success."

Seeds of Leadership are planted when creativity is cherished. Leadership blossoms when creativity meets knowledge, whether that's in the classroom, in the family or around the world. Exploration is a natural response to creativity and that was always nurtured in my years at PS1."



Save The Date!

January	6 School Resumes
	9 Admissions Tour
	10 Memoir Club
	15 Parent Education with Penelope
	16 Chorus Performance
	20 MLK Jr. Day
	23 Memoir Club
	31 Faculty Professional Development Day
<hr/>	
February	3 Reenrollment Deposits Due
	6 Admissions Tour
	9 Itty Bitty Art Sale
	12 Parent Education with Penelope
	14 Valentine Exchange / Memoir Club
	17-21 Presidents' Day Break Week
	27 Memoir Club
<hr/>	
March	14 Memoir Club
	20 PS1 Open House
	21 Pajama Day
	23 Pluralism Week
	25 Dishversity Day
	27 Memoir Club
	31-April 4 Spring Break Week

Connect With Us!



Network with us on LinkedIn



Like us on Facebook

PS1 In the News

PS1 Students in Abbie and Billy's class (2012-13) were featured in Saint John's Hospital's Breakthroughs Magazine after assembling eye writers (eye-tracking glasses and open-source software that allow people suffering from neuromuscular diseases to write and draw by tracking their eye movement and translating it to lines on a screen) for patients at Saint John's. Students, working in teams, learned how to configure the eye writers from inventor (and PS1 parent) Mark Ebeling.

happenings



LEARNING ABOUT THE EYEWITER
 Local students at PS1 Pluralistic School in Santa Monica gathered at Saint John's Health Center to showcase the prototype of the EyeWriter. The children learned about the revolutionary device from Mick Ebeling, the visionary behind the device and a parent at the school.

The EyeWriter was created for TemptOne, a local graffiti artist diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease in 2003. The disease leads to eventual total paralysis. However the EyeWriter, a collaboration from the Ebeling Group and Graffiti Research Lab, uses eye-tracking glasses and open-source software to allow people suffering from neuromuscular diseases to write and draw by tracking their eye movement and translating it to lines on a screen.

Ebeling and his assistant set up workshops in the classroom, and the children worked in groups to assemble the EyeWriters.