



Wellsprings Friends School

Autumn, 2008

Newsletter

3590 West 18th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97402

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Why Wellsprings?

by Brigid Johns ('08)



I started at Wellsprings last January which is almost a year ago from now, and since then I have grown as a person more than I have in the last 17 years of my life. I attribute this to Wellsprings. In the beginning, I felt a bit awkward

because everyone was so close. But even then, the teachers and a few students made me very comfortable and I never felt like I had to change my personality because of social structures like at public school. I found the less I tried to fit in and the more I was myself, the more people accepted me. After a few months, I truly felt at ease and a part of the community.

The teachers are really here because they want us to learn and grow. I consider all of them like family. The friendships that I have gotten from this school are ones I know can withstand anything. No matter where I am, if I see a fellow (or former) Wellsprings student, it's like seeing a relative.

The environment at Wellsprings make kids feel comfortable, and when people are in a place they feel comfortable, they flourish. I think that it's a combination of the place (the home-like building), the people, and how we are in a community that makes it so comfortable. I really do like that we have community building and chores, because it has shown me we all need to pull our weight to make things work. At public school we were all just fish battling to get upstream. Here, at Wellsprings we help everyone out.

Wellsprings has shown me that even when things seem bad, scary, or different, there's always another side to it. Some of the people here could look a certain way or like certain things but from being here and getting to really know them, it's easy to see how similar and good people can be. Wellsprings changed my life for the better, and I truly don't know where I would be without it.

by Desirae Ambrose ('10)

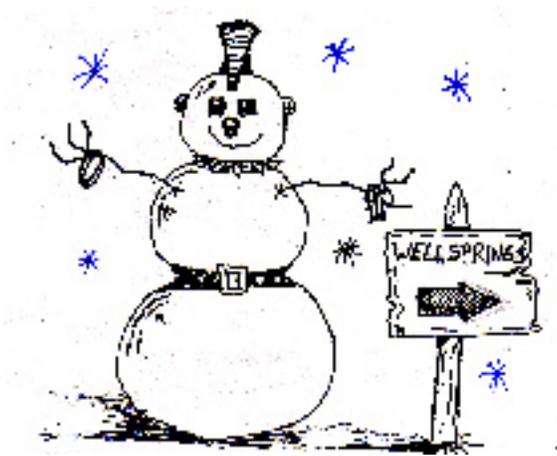


Wellsprings has been so much better for me than any other school that I've ever been to. I go to Wellsprings because I was failing horribly at public school. I had a 0.7 GPA. I was constantly in detention and I was suspended frequently for behavioral and truancy issues. I hated all the people around me, constantly, and I hated the mindlessness of all of it—different people with the same faces, marching back and forth from each class, and teachers who really don't care who'll you'll be in a few years. I felt like I was in a cage.

Everything changed after coming here to Wellsprings. The work is easier and more comprehensive, so I enjoy my work. The students are approachable and friendly, and the teachers are really laid back and good-natured. I am passing all of my classes—for the first time in my life, I have plans for college. This school is like a second family for me as it is has been and will be for so many others.

Wellsprings has made me a more open-minded person. I deal better with social interactions outside of school and I have become more responsible. My outlook on life has improved greatly and I plan to stay in Wellsprings for the rest of high school.

“...when people are in a place they feel comfortable, they flourish.”



Busy Fall Schedule

by Yancey DeYoung

Every year we spend time focusing on community. Both our school community and the larger community as a whole. We stress interpersonal skills

and believe that learning how to be part of a group and get along with others is just as important as any academic subject. By creating activities where people interact, have fun, share stories, and

just spend time together, we help reinforce the idea that we are a team and need to support each other in both good and bad times.

One highlight during the fall was our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Held the Friday prior to the Thanksgiving holiday, students, staff, and parents spend hours prepping for a feast that everyone then sits down together for. This year we served 75 students and family members. In addition, 25 packaged meals were handed out to the homeless after our communal meal was finished. It is often said that food brings people together and this was definitely evidence of that idea.

Fall Activities

- Bowling
- Non-violence conference
- Miniature golfing
- Oregon Zoo
- Gender Day
- Community service
- Halloween party
- OMSI presentation
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Holiday Free Sale
- Holiday Party

Why I Come to Wellsprings

by Megan Fontmeyer

My name is Megan Fontmeyer and I go to Eugene Bible College. Students at my school are required to do two hours of ministry a week. I met a few of the students here at the bus stop so I decided to volunteer here because the kids at Wellsprings just really stand out in the crowd. They weren't afraid of being individuals and although they are very outspoken, most of them are very accepting and open minded.

I could have volunteered at a public school, but I really like the uniqueness of the students at Wellsprings. At first I thought this may have been an art school, but they are just artistic kids. Honestly, I came in here thinking the students were going to be slackers. My first day I was blown away by their intelligence. There are no more slackers at Wellsprings than at any other school.

I really like the methods of teaching used here. Because it's such a small school there is a lot of one on one attention. The teachers actually want to hear opinions and not just hand out work. Many of the teachers are young and can relate to the students.

“They weren't afraid of being individuals...”

Being here has helped me to be less judgmental towards people. I love the fact that students here will just come up and introduce themselves. I love that they ask about my religion but don't necessarily shun me. If I could go back to being in high school I would want to attend a school like this.





Marcella “Sali” Grace Eiler

September 30, 1987 September 15, 2008

A Portrait by Her Mother

Sali is loved and cherished as a daughter to Barbara Healy and John Eiler, a stepdaughter to Catherine Eiler, a sister to Claire Eiler, Cavan Telford, and Erin Telford.

Sali was a citizen of our planet. Sali believed that the earth and the animals and

people who inhabited it have a right to grow and thrive, and deserve respect.

Sali was young, beautiful, had a powerful heart and a deep passion for justice. She:

- supported animal rights, and fought against cruelty in animal experimentation. She volunteered at the Humane Society.
- worked with “Food Not Bombs” in a number of North American cities, recovering food and turning it into hot meals available to anyone. She believed food is a right, not a privilege.
- worked with “Los Sobravivientes,” teaching English to Central American torture survivors who had come to live in Oregon.
- worked with “Cascadia Forest Defenders” saving the last of the old growth tree forests in Oregon from logging.
- contributed to “Indymedia,” a collective of independent media organizations and journalists offering grassroots coverage of news events in communities throughout the world.
- worked with “No More Deaths” in Mexico and Arizona, a humanitarian movement that provides water, food and medical assistance to migrants walking across the Arizona desert.
- worked with “CIPO-RFM” in Mexico, a movement that promotes peaceful co-existence of autonomous, self sufficient communities and indigenous people, and defends the territorial, economic, social, political and cultural rights of those communities and individuals.



The brief outline above highlights issues that spoke to Sali. These are a piece of the whole. Sali was so much more. She was a singer, a banjo player, a dance teacher and performer, a member of a Mexican punk band, Cinzana, and an accomplished artist. A wonderful cook and herbalist, a beloved daughter, sister and loyal friend

to many. An inspiring humanitarian, a courageous woman of warmth, laughter and endless energy who believed anything was possible. Any change achievable. Any goal possible.

Marcella “Sali” Grace Eiler was murdered on September 15, 2008. Our family and friends deeply mourn her loss. Memorials for Sali have been held across Mexico and North America. Sali’s Eugene memorial will be held in Spring 2009. We, Sali’s family, look forward to having the Wellsprings community attend, and will communicate the date to Dennis once it is firmed up. We appreciate the contribution that Wellsprings made to Sali’s life.

Sali Eiler was part of the Wellsprings community for the fall semester of the 2003/04 school year. Highly committed to service, Sali—among other involvements—was active in Food Not Bombs, daily gathering food from dumpsters and cooking it for the homeless. As part of an Independent Study, Sali kept a journal of her activities. Not only were her stories eye-opening for me but deeply, deeply moving. Schoolwork simply was not as important, not as real, not as meaningful, for Sali as the work she was doing. Against her mother’s wishes—but with an agreement about keeping regularly in touch—Sali hopped a freight train and began a long journey to many cities, working with Food Not Bombs or other people and groups everywhere she went. She knew at such a young age the path she wanted to follow and she did follow it, caring and giving her full self every day of her short but extraordinary life.

-Dennis

Fifth Fulltime Teacher Added

by Ayashe Ruiz ('08)

This fall, Wellsprings added a fifth fulltime teacher, Tyler Tjernlund. Tyler began his career at Wellsprings last fall as the "kitchen lady." He was raised in Albany, Oregon until he moved to Eugene at age 18 to attend college. He came to Wellsprings to be of help to youth who were similar to him in high school: not fitting the mainstream, and struggling to become yourself not just the kind of person everyone expects. Being at the school allowed Tyler to give to students something he never had: love and unconditional support in being true to yourself.

Tyler began teaching part time last winter, subjects such as philosophy, history, and language arts. Teaching allows Tyler to share his love of learning and looking at things more deeply.

Dealing with student problems, Tyler works hard at having endless patience and looking at the situation from the student's point of view. Being a role model makes Tyler feel responsible for his actions and keeps him looking critically at himself to improve. As one student pointed out, "we love him and wouldn't have him any other way."



First Year Teacher, Eva Brill

by Nataya Caraveo ('09)

Our new teacher, Eva Brill, is excited about the idea of teaching science at Wellsprings. She came from New York City where she graduated with a Bachelors in Liberal Arts from Eugene Lang College. At college, she majored in environmental studies with a concentration on science, technology, and society.

At Wellsprings, Eva teaches a little bit of every kind of science. She also relates today's scientific issues to our lives and how we live. Eva likes having the freedom to teach what she is interested in and what students are interested in. She also likes the laid back environment at Wellsprings and how individuality stands out here.

After school, Eva likes to hike for fun, loves to watch old movies from all times, hangs out with her dog, and likes to cook.

I think that Eva is very creative, kind hearted, funny, and amazing to be around. She always looks on the bright side of things. Even though I've only been here this year, I think that she is a great teacher to have at Wellsprings Friends School.



Benefit Night

Friday, February 13, 2009

6:00pm

Cozmic Pizza

199 W. 8th Avenue, Eugene



This will be an exciting evening of student and staff musical performances, student artwork, and community. Please join us to support the many talented teens at Wellsprings and to help raise funds for the school.



From Ashes to Classes: the New “Mod”

After an arson fire destroyed our modular classroom last April, teachers and students had to live in close quarters while creatively using space in our main building for the rest of the school year. So everyone was very excited to have a replacement “mod” up and running in early September! It was a longer and more complicated process than we had anticipated.

The first step was getting the okay from the insurance adjustor. Then we secured a replacement that was available locally—which as usual was designed as a single large classroom. Although the dealer installed a partition, it was not sufficient to muffle sounds between the rooms. Our contractor for setting up the mod and a volunteer, long-time Wellsprings Trustee John Etter, installed a second wall with insulation.

There were time lags and delays during the building permit stage, with new requirements as well as previous ones to be met. Thanks to diligent efforts by the contractor and many long hours of volunteer labor by John Etter—helping to build the ramp, installing the skirting, meeting with city inspectors, and much more—students and teachers were able to move in during the second week of school.

Bob, whose classroom in the old mod was the coolest place on campus, has guided students to creating a special place once again. “We’ve made the new classroom,” Bob says, “a place where students can feel safe and comfortable... a creative place that each individual feels a part of... a place where they can learn at their own pace.” The other classroom was put in the hands of new staff member, Eva, who says “it’s like a retreat for both students and the teacher... an environment that’s just great for learning.”

Although we lost an important and emotion-laden piece of Wellsprings history in the arson, we count our blessings that the replacement cost was almost entirely covered by insurance, and that the new mod, ironically, is in better structural shape than the old. Best of all, students and teachers have already made it their own.



New! Wellsprings Friends Blog!

To share “what’s happening” each week at Wellsprings Friends School with our community and the world, we’ve started a blog. Check it out at:

www.wellspringsfriends.blogspot.com

We invite you to subscribe to receive new postings and to join our conversation on the blog.

Thank you!

Without support from the community, Wellsprings Friends School would not be able to do what we do for young people. Thank you to all of you who have given time, items or financial contributions. This list covers the period from July 1 to December 10, 2008. If we have unintentionally omitted your name, please let us know.

Anita Browning	Lee Kersten
Barry's Espresso & Bakery	Lou Sondag
Bill Cadbury	Marjorie Mikesell
Christine Theodoropoulos	Marlitt Dellabough
Darby Shindruk	Mary Graves Johnson
Darita Rose Alden	Mary Steinberg-Pichey
Debra Selleck	Megan Fontmeyer
Dora Parys	Nancy Yen-wen Cheng
Elizabeth King	Nathan Sauser
Eugene City Coffee	Oak Hill School
Glenna Butler	Peg Morton
Hanna Still	Rudy Berg
Helen Park	Schuler Family
James Fox	Springfield Church of the Brethren
Janet Kallstrom	Susan Sondag
John Etter	Sweet Leaf Farm
Jon Garlinghouse	Terrye Eames
Katya Blissenbach & Gail Brown	Todd Peterson
Laura Lee LaRue	UO Students of Arch 484/584
Laura Jane Stevenson	Vicki Morgan

An Easy, No Extra Cost Way to Support Wellsprings

You can help raise money for Wellsprings Friends School while you shop at local and national merchants. Each month, the school receives a portion of every dollar you spend at Market of Choice, Safeway, Macy's, and other stores and restaurants. It does not cost you anything extra! Plus, your family and friends living anywhere in the country can participate as well.

The eScrip program offers a safe, effective way to make regular contributions to Wellsprings. Once you enroll in the program, there is nothing else you need to do. Our school benefits from every purchase you make at participating stores.

It's easy to sign up. You can enroll online at www.escrip.com. Just click on "Sign Up – It's Free" and identify Wellsprings Friends School as beneficiary of your purchase dollars. Then complete the simple registration steps. If you have any questions, just call Yancey in the office at 686-1223.

Thank you for using eScrip to help raise funds for our school!