

Guest Blogger Samantha: Our Waverly School Experience

Description

The Waverly High School campus

default watermark

When my oldest daughter was in first grade at The Waverly School (in Pasadena, Calif.), she met a family who was considering sending their son there. They asked her why she liked Waverly. “Well,” she said, “there’s the farm, and math, and journal writing, and my friends, and singing, and my teachers – pretty much everything! But why are you thinking about Waverly?”

I was slightly stunned (but proud of my daughter). Here was a six-year old looking an adult in the eye and providing a thoughtful response to a question – and then asking an insightful question of her own.

Yes, THAT conversation is because of Waverly. Don’t get me wrong, my husband and I would like to take a wee bit of credit, but Waverly deserves much of the praise here.

So, how did we end up at Waverly?

Flashback to when my daughter was three. *I took on the task of finding a private school with every bit of energy I had* – which meant I had reams of files, brochures, and bookmarks on my computer. I networked with friends to find out what others liked and didn’t like. I attended many fund-raisers (now, that was a dangerous year for us – I know how to work a silent auction). I embarked on numerous school tours.

The tours ended up being the most important step in our journey to find the right school. I will never forget when I heard Heidi Johnson, head of school at Waverly, speak for the first time. She just made so much sense. Heidi shared an anecdote about their youngest students in Young Kindergarten taken from one of their weekly trips to the Waverly Organic Farm.

The students were asked to stand in a tight circle and try to hold out their arms, but they couldn’t. Then, they were asked to take a few steps away from each other and then extend their arms. The teacher talked to the children about this newfound experience and asked them how that felt. After they discussed their first-hand observations, they talked about how they would feel if they were seeds.

This simple, real world lesson in how to plant seeds, giving them the room they need to stretch and grow, created an opportunity to learn at a level I had never considered before.

I wondered if everyone else in the room had a gigantic cartoon lightbulb turning on over their heads, like I did. I rushed home and got the application filled out and submitted in record time.

How did we get in? I really don’t know.

What I do know is that friends going through this process ask me regularly what I think of Waverly. Of course, I rave about the school. I co-chair one of its major events every year (a fabulous craft fair – sorry I am in PR and cannot help but plug it), make latkes every Hanukkah for both of my kids’ classes, attend as many First Friday Farmer Markets that I can, and proudly walk my daughters into school every morning since we ALL want to say “good morning” to Meg at the front desk – all while I work full-time.

Actually, I think we got into Waverly because we were right for Waverly, and Waverly thought we were right for the school.

When my daughter asked that family, “Why are you thinking about Waverly?” she was asking more than she knew. She was asking them to take charge of their decision and find the match that made sense for their family. We often think the power to get into the “right” school belongs solely to the school. But, even though a school might offer you a space, it ultimately up to you to choose what is right for you.

Samantha Sackin is an executive vice president at GolinHarris. A third generation Angeleno, she and her husband, Tom, live in Highland Park with their two daughters, a Pollinator (2nd grade) and a Traveling Toucan (Young Kindergarten) at [The Waverly School](#) in Pasadena, Calif.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. Waverly School Pasaadena

Date Created

February 17, 2011

Author

admin

default watermark