

The People Behind The Blog and Book-Who Are We?

Description



About This Blog

Beyond The Brochure is just over 10 years old! In 2010, after the release of the First Edition of our book, *Beyond The Brochure: An Insider's Guide To Private Elementary Schools In Los Angeles*, my co-authors and I decided we wanted to write a blog to accompany the book. Now, 9 years later, we're still writing. [The Third Edition](#) of the book was released in September 2017. What started as a book project is now a small business!

Who Writes This Blog?

Most of the writing on the blog is done by me ([Christina](#)) with the occasional post from [Anne Simon](#) (my amazing co-author who is also my step-mom) and our fabulous guest bloggers. The blog is about all aspects of private elementary school admissions. It's also about what life is like at some of these private schools. I'm proud that *Beyond The Brochure* has been featured on The *BBC* and *KPCC* and *Town and Country*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *LA Parent*, *Red Tricycle*, *Mommy Poppins* and *Santa Monica Macaroni Kid* and numerous other publications.



What Kind of Blog Is This?

[If you're new here](#), welcome! Stripped of context, *Beyond The Brochure* might seem like a lot of things it isn't. So let me explain. This is primarily a how-to blog (how to get your kid into private elementary school without losing your mind). It's not a review of private schools. It's also my story of applying to kindergarten (stressful!), enrolling my kids at The Willows School, the ups and downs during those years. And, it's about my kids moving to [Viewpoint School](#) for 4th and 7th grade. Yes, we went through the middle school process (very, very stressful!). My son Dylan is in 11th grade at Viewpoint (class of 2022) and my daughter Ryann was class of 2019. She is currently a sophomore at Northwestern University in the Medill School of Journalism. Both have been challenged and inspired at Viewpoint. It's an exceptionally good school.

What Topics Are Covered on the Blog?

My goal is for this blog to be simultaneously helpful and something you can relate to. You'll find that this blog follows the schedule of the admissions process. When you're agonizing over written applications and taking off work to tour schools, that's what we'll be covering. For example, what should you look for during a school tour besides what the school wants you to see? When you're taking your child for visiting/testing day, we'll be writing about that topic. You'll also find pieces about all aspects of private school life, from tuition and annual giving to Q&A interviews with [educational consultants](#) and upcoming private school events. Writing about what's trendy at private schools is also one of my favorite subjects. Of course, the blog contains a bit of snarkiness, along with a sense of humor (required to get through the admissions process). I also share stuff I write as a freelancer for other sites. Our growing [Facebook page](#) is a great place to see the information we post that's not on the blog.



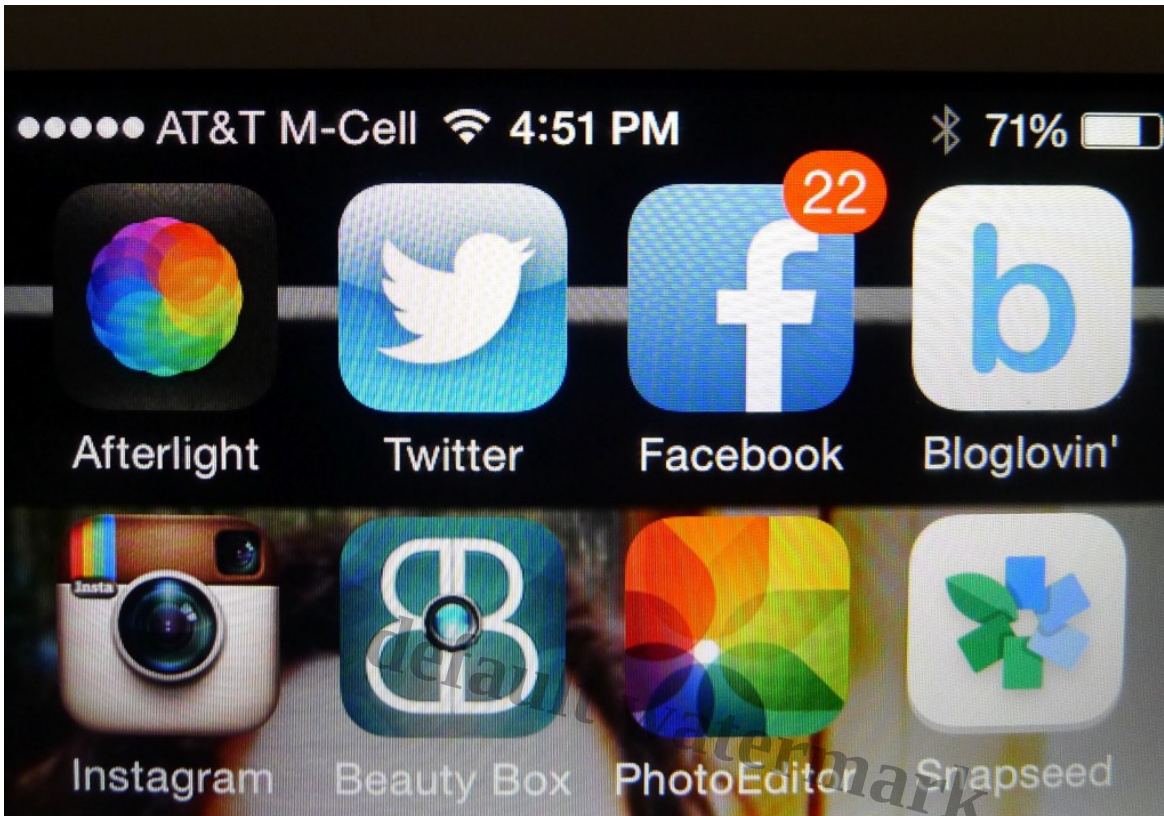
Who Reads This Blog?

About 15,000 each month, moms and dads who want their kids to attend L.A. private school are reading it. Both the book and the blog are written for parents. Neither is intended for school admissions directors, although some of them read it too. Weâ€™ve received emails from a few heads of school telling us they like our blog (we know what theyâ€™re really saying is â€œwatch what you say about my schoolâ€™). Itâ€™s our belief and personal experience that a lot of the schools hold tightly to information about admissions, making it difficult for parents who arenâ€™t â€œinsidersâ€• to find out much about them, let alone get their kids in. We think private school websites have improved over the past few years, but still offer only the minimum amount of information needed to apply. Navigating the admissions process isnâ€™t addressed on school websites. So, every year, thousands of parents around L.A. re-invent the wheel looking for information about schools, asking questions, seeking the best school for their kids. Itâ€™s a process of course, but it doesnâ€™t need to be so strenuous! *For example, what should you expect during a parent interview? What kind of questions might be asked? What are you expected to know and/or ask? What makes a good parent interview? What should you do if the parent interview doesnâ€™t go well?* These are just some of the questions we focus on.

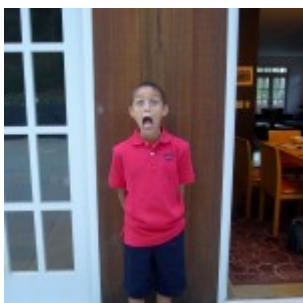


Who Writes This Blog?

The blog is written mostly by me ([Christina Simon](#)). I spend about 20 hours a week writing, attending social media events, writing for other publications and speaking at preschools about kindergarten admissions. I post here months. Tools of the trade include my iPhone 8Plus, a Panasonic Lumix camera, Picktochart for infographics, PicMonkey for photo editing and a bunch of photo editing apps like Afterlight. Together, my co-authors and I answer all reader emails and we welcome comments. There are a lot of L.A. private schools that are excellent. Some are traditional, others are progressive or developmental. I don't typically say one is better than another, only different. It depends on what you're looking for in a school. These schools are expensive, so if you don't know, that should be your starting point. It takes me several hours to write each post. Sometimes, I think about a post, editing and re-editing for several days or talking to people in the know to get another perspective on a post. Our most popular posts lately are about [tuition](#). I'm on [Facebook](#) daily, but as a work-at-home-mom, I have to make sure a big portion of my day doesn't become too solitary. Writing a blog can be isolating, so I try to schedule lunches with other colleagues and friends, tour schools for our [School Profiles](#) section and schedule meetings to break up the day, which also consists of racing around in sweat pants or jeans doing laundry, washing dishes, grocery shopping, picking up kids, going to my son's games and volunteering at school (a lot like your day, probably).



Professionalism and confidentiality matter. We understand that many readers are reluctant to comment due to concerns about confidentiality. We have never, ever shared a reader email or comment with anyone. You can leave an anonymous comment and be assured your name will remain anonymous. Comments are moderated because we aren't interested in a bunch of spam or nasty Internet troll comments. You'll see that my interests are focused on issues like finding your community at private school (this has been my biggest challenge), school gardens and the culture of L.A. private schools. Some private schools are very similar to elite country clubs, while others are far more accessible to regular families. I think private schools should be available to families who aren't private school legacies or uber-wealthy. That means information about how to apply needs to be easily available to anyone who wants it. Financial aid information, which is used to help middle-income families, not just low-income parents, should also be accessible. I've seen a lot of this city's private elementary and secondary schools, but not all of them (yet!).



First day of Viewpoint, 2013



Off to their new school!

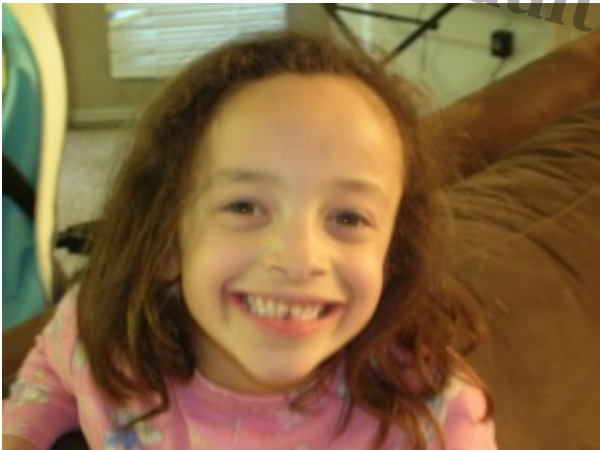
I donâ€™t write much about my kidsâ€™ academic experience for privacy reasons. I started using my kidsâ€™ names when they became public because of sports (my son, Dylan) and writing (my daughter, Ryann). What I will say is that I have two absolutely amazing, spirited, insightful, kind, smart and funny kids. Generally speaking, theyâ€™re both very good students with different interests and personalities. My son is 15 and heâ€™s a serious athlete who plays club soccer and club basketball, in addition to school sports. He loves math. My daughter, 18, has several favorite subjects like French, writing and journalism. My husband, Barry Perlstein, has written a [few posts](#) for the blog. Heâ€™s a really good writer and very funny. He majored in math at Harvard and then he graduated from Harvard law school. He works in management consulting and previously in private equity. We both volunteer for non-profit organizations, tutoring and providing pro-bono legal work for immigrant families. For the past few years, heâ€™s volunteered as an alumni interviewer for Harvard. Heâ€™s definitely the smartest person I know. We try to find balance in our parenting style, but we donâ€™t always achieve it. He handles most of the sports stuff for our son. We donâ€™t want to push our kids too hard, but we want them to take advantage of the opportunities they are fortunate to have at Viewpoint.



I grew up in Topanga and went to public school including Santa Monica High. It was too big and impersonal. It is one of the reason I wanted my kids to experience a smaller, more nurturing private school environment. I attended college at UC Berkeley and worked in politics and corporate public relations for many years. After living in Hancock Park, Barry and I wanted a change so we moved to Coldwater Canyon. About 10 years ago I started playing tennis and its one of my absolute favorite things to do. Our family also includes a rescue pit bull named Cocoa. Supporting charitable causes and hosting/attending events are what we do to give back whenever we can. My guilty pleasures are shopping, celebrity and fashion magazines, HGTV and Bravo, Netflix and Amazon, good books and

going to my favorite restaurants like Jar, AOC and Madeo. I drink coffee because without it I'm not myself. I enjoy going to dinner with friends. I'm in a writer's group and it's one of the highlights of my month. For the past 3 years, I've volunteered at 826LA helping high school students at low-resourced public schools write college essays and with all types of in-class writing projects. In 2017, I became the senior nonfiction editor of Angels Flight Literary West, an online lit journal and offline literary salon.

What I can tell you is how much we appreciate you, our readers. You buy our book and read our blog, you come to our speaking events and tell your friends about this site. This amazes us. Copies of the used book are pulled from your shelf and given to other moms (and dads). That is what keeps me writing, inspired and motivated. One reader emailed me to tell me that she "adores every word I write." Anne too, has received the nicest notes from our readers. That means so much to us. Just when I want to hit the delete button on this blog out of my own perfectionism or feelings of inadequacy, your kindness and support comes across my desk in the form of an email or a blog comment and my day is complete. We've also received incredible support from many preschool directors who consider private kindergarten admissions part of their job. We appreciate how often they invite us to speak at their preschools and share our book and blog with parents at their schools.



Thank You To Beyond The Brochure Readers

Our readers say thank you in the most heartfelt way possible. You let us know when your kid gets into a fabulous school. You ask smart questions. You tell us when something doesn't go right, but how you're going to fix it. You ask for advice and are so appreciative when we offer it. You share our Facebook posts. This is all so appreciated and keeps us connected to our online community. Those of you who I've met at events are so sweet and in you, I see myself many years ago, with a preschooler at [Montessori Shir-Hashirim](#) in Hollywood, nervous about getting into a good school, wanting only the best for my little girl. Truly, you make this blog what it is.

xoxo

Christina

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Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. About Beyond The Brochure

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admin

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