

Learning With Nuggets Of Gold At The Willows School

Description



Cover of "The Willows Voice" Winter 2011

Sure the essentials are all there. Math, reading, science. But what always amazes me is the broader palette of sheer creativity brought into the Willows classroom. It's what is taught AND how it's taught. Just about everything the kids learn connects to other aspects of their work. Integrated curriculum is what it's called. Really it's an ingeniously creative curriculum.

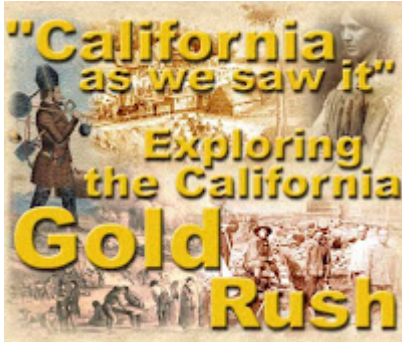
Lisa Rosenstein, The Willows head of school says, "Focus on creativity, critical thinking and problem solving is central to who we are and what we do in every discipline."

My daughter's 4th grade class just completed their study unit on the Gold Rush. What could have been a dreadfully boring subject was transformed into a fascinating and totally exciting few months for the kids.

Parents were invited to attend the end of the study unit culmination event or "culmination." It consisted of a high-energy musical production that completely captivated the audience. My daughter doesn't have an interest in musical theater, but there she was singing and dancing on stage, with a huge smile on her face.



After the musical, we went into the classrooms for an open-house. Our kids showed us their Gold Rush themed art work, awesome stories they had written, both individually and in groups, and a technology component with kids narrating Gold Rush stories. My daughter's wonderful story received 5 gold nuggets from the teacher. A perfect grade! I'm such a proud mom.



My daughter was especially captivated by The Gold Rush Game. As she and her friend explained the game to me, kids were grouped into mining groups of four students. Over the course of the study unit, each team made group decisions and problem solved. The students wrote mining logs about activities that were taking place in their mining groups. They also participated in competitive question/answer classroom sessions where correctly answered questions were rewarded with gold nuggets and incorrectly answered questions received no gold nuggets.

The reason I know my daughter was inspired? For the first time, she asked to take Guitar lessons at Marlborough summer school. Worth its weight in gold!

Next up for 4th grade? A study unit on physics.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

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