



The Independent Mind

Community Building

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“Education is not
preparation for life;
education is life
itself.”

- John Dewey

At Clear Spring we practice Progressive Education which means we view education as active and relational. Teachers and students work together to explore the world around them as it actually exists, to participate in life not merely to study about life. This means we do a lot of things. This is the obvious and easy to see part of what we do. The more challenging to explain, and sometimes hard to see, is the investigation and reflection of what we do. Teachers and staff participate in the process of investigation and reflection as well, we meet to discuss how well we are meeting the needs of the students and plan together ways to improve what we do. We as a faculty model the process of experiential learning and we constantly challenge ourselves to better reflect the mission of the school.

One of the school’s central aims is community building. This takes place in the classroom, at staff meetings, school functions and on the many trips we take. In order to build community, we design projects and lessons to prepare students for active participation in a democratic and socially just society. This requires us to participate in the world around us, our community. It is one of the reasons we say that it is not just the student that joins the school but the whole family. It is also why the school feels more like a family than an institution, this is intentional. As a school we recognize the challenge in maintaining relationships between students, teachers, staff and families. Through the APT (Association of Parents and Teachers) we strive to build the school community and our goal is to provide a platform for families to support each other and learn more about the school. It is the ‘together’ part of our mission.

When classes take trips into the community, they develop knowledge and understanding of our town and surrounding counties. This experience in the community helps students understand their role and responsibility in the community and develops skills in citizenship and democracy. This is also reflected in the classroom when students practice their skills of communication and collaboration to work together on projects and lessons. When students return to the classroom from trips, they often deconstruct the activity and reflect on what was learned. Sometimes classes return from trips where things did not go as planned. The unplanned, and on occasion ‘failed’ activity, is viewed as an opportunity.

Too often failure in schools is treated as something to be avoided, and obstacles removed from students before they have the chance to overcome them. If students performed and behaved perfectly all the time, when would they have the opportunity to learn and change? Growth requires challenge, failure and reflection.

Being an active participant in any community requires many of our character skills including flexibility, cooperation, problem-solving and responsibility. These skills are practiced through intentionally designed activities and time to reflect on the challenges inherent in working together. It takes time to build community within the classroom and across the school. One of our current challenges is maintaining and rebuilding our community that has been lost through the disruptions of our normal activities because of COVID and our responses to it. We were unable to travel, have potlucks and gather as a whole school in our traditional ways. Now as we rebuild our school community, we have the opportunity to create new traditions and support one another as we demonstrate that we really are all in this together.

Clear Spring APT

Clear Spring School's Association of Parents and Teachers has a new President this year, D.J. Diggs, shown below leading a group of Clear Spring students, parents and teachers in this years Eureka Springs Christmas parade. The APT meets once a month and have been planning several activities to support the school.

They will be conducting a fundraising raffle of this beautiful quilt created in the sewing classes with Mark Hughs last year with blocks made by our students. Our LTL students are holding up the quilt but for more detailed images see the website.



Raffle tickets are on sale, and are \$6 each or 2 for \$10. The raffle will end during this year's Spring Fling Silent Auction where the winner will be drawn. You do not have to be present to win. Get your tickets by contacting the parents or contact the office for more information.

The APT will also be traveling to Bentonville to pick up 12 new bikes that were donated to the school through the Pedal it Forward program and a generous donor, Rock Mortgage.

Greetings to the Clear Spring Alumni

Dear Alumni,

For the past year, many of us at CSS have been working in a concerted effort to find a way to facilitate connection among all of you former students whose lives have been touched by your experiences with us when you attended school here. The importance of this came into sharp focus recently, during our accreditation renewal visit with ISACS, when I had the privilege of participating in a Zoom conference where 4 former students discussed the impact the school had on their lives.

These four past students came from different periods in the lifetime of the school. Johnathan Stalling became a student in 1981, Kelsey Meyers in 1991, Hendrik Pot in 1999 and Hawk Slane in 2011. All four of these young men have the common thread of a certain spark that was ignited in them during their time here. They all described a process of self-discovery, empowerment, and the ability to seek out knowledge and opportunity through their own initiative. Even though none of these alumni had ever met, you could see them getting excited over each other's stories, nodding in affirmation about that "special something" that they experienced in their education here.

This Zoom meeting really highlighted to me the importance of finding a way to connect former students, whether you attended CSS for one year or twelve. Our school community is one of engagement and connection, hands-on and hearts-engaged. We miss you former students. We need you to remain engaged with the school, to visit when you come to the area, to become involved again with the school in any way you can. Not only is alumni engagement crucial to the future of the school, it will be of benefit to each of you as individuals as well.



Alumni catching up at June's at Gotahold Brewery in June

Towards that goal, we have started a Facebook Alumni Association group page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/318185919744572>

Please join, invite other alumni with whom you still have contact. We also have a short alumni survey link on our website that we ask you to complete <https://www.clearspringschool.org/alumni> and while you are there, check out our new site and all the current happenings at the school. We have realized many long-term goals in the past few years, and we are sure you will be excited when you see what we are doing.

We are not a traditional school, and we do not have traditional school reunions. Just like everything else meaningful in life, we must make it happen ourselves. The alumni must find connection with each other through their own initiative. We can provide the platform, but it is you who must make it happen. After seeing the happy sparks flying back and forth among the four previously unacquainted alumni on a computer Zoom meeting, I can promise you all that it will be worth the effort!

Warm regards,

Peggy Pot, Past President of the Board & Clear Spring Parent

Classroom Connections



Clear Spring School gathers for the 2021-22 all school picture. Lots of new and familiar smiling faces and we are so excited to welcome everyone back to campus this fall.

Teachers and students have been exploring, building and going on exciting field trips. Each Classroom has adopted a bird name and designed a flag shown in the picture to the right. Chris's class are the Crows, Sam's class are the Scissor-tail Flycatchers, Juanita's class are the Hawks and Ridgon's class are the Chickadees. Here are some of the wonderful learning experiences the student's have had this fall.



Meet the Crows - they have been exploring around Eureka Springs as well as creating things with Doug and Dustin in the woodshop for their new "Pay What You Want Shop".



Meet the Hawks- they have been building a bathhouse with Doug and participated in a program called "Goin' on a Bug Hunt." at Hobbs State Park



Meet the Scissor-tail Flycatchers - they have been learning about local history by visiting the ES Library and the Saunders Museum in Berryville



Meet the Chickadees - they have been learning about art and have visited Terra Studios, and local artist Suzanne Reed's Studio Art-Niks



Clear Spring Receives Grant Support for a School Greenhouse, Bikes and More!

Recent grant awards to Clear Spring School are helping us continue to grow our outdoor spaces with a new Greenhouse. Cox Communications has awarded us with an innovation grant of \$2500 for 2022 to support our fundraising efforts to build a greenhouse on campus. We have enough to begin the project this spring! We have also completed our Bike Park with money raised over the summer with our June Bike Club and Facebook Birthday fundraisers. It looks amazing and we have reached out to partner with "Pedal it Forward" in NWA who have donated 12 bikes and helmets to get our bike club going. We also received some bike helmets, a mountain bike and other equipment during our June fundraiser at GotaHold. We want to send our thanks to



Proposed Greenhouse design



Carl Herber at the new Bike Park that he designed and built on campus

the community and especially GotaHold Brewery for support local non-profits and hosting our month-long fundraising event. We also want to applaud the beautiful craftsmanship of the new Bike Park built by Alumnus Carl Herbert. Great job!

Clear Spring School also has an official library located in the old music room our library has a wonderful space. We have received a grant from the Elks Lodge in Holiday Island in October to help us purchase some books for our students and we are very excited to add to our collections books that offer support for the visually impaired and that teach tolerance and diversity.



The Elks grant will help us purchase some large print books and books that help children with dyslexia learn to read. We are so grateful to have such a supportive community to live in!

SAVE THE DATE! The Clear Spring Fling will be here before you know it! We are currently collecting donations and sponsorships for the upcoming Clear Spring Fling silent auction on March 11, 2022. As of this printing we are still not sure that we will have a live event this year but the online auction is definitely on. Contact the school to donate.



Did you know Clear Spring School turns 50 in 2024?

Celebrating
Education
for 50 years

Help us celebrate our success by
Building a Path to the Future

Please consider donating to our brick fundraiser - the money raised will go to support the school's endowment and will give back forever!

For more information about the building site, the school's endowment and the brick fundraiser visit our website <https://www.clearspringschool.org/endowment-fund> (479) 253-7888 - 374 Dairy Hollow Road, Eureka Springs

Make your donation and select a brick in your name at our fundraising page <https://www.fundraisingbrick.com/clearspring/>

Meet our new Clear Spring Staff

Clear Spring School welcomes our new staff. From left to right: Aly Cabrales is our new Math teacher, Dustin Griffith is the new Woodshop Assistant and our Makerspace teacher, Nathina Robinson is our new Director of Finance and Assistant to the Head of School, and Kendra is our new Drama & Creative Writing teacher. You can read more about them and the great work they are doing on our website on our staff page.



Tax Deductible Donation Form

Clear Spring School is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We rely upon the financial support of individual and corporate contributions in order to continue providing the quality education we have been known for since 1974. If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to Clear Spring School, please complete the form or call us at (479) 253-7888. Tax Donation Letters are available.

Give online at www.clearspringsschool.org/giving

Name _____

Address _____

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I have enclosed \$ _____ towards:

- Phyllis Poe Hands-On Learning Center
- Clear Spring School's Endowment
- Adopt Excellence (Scholarship Program)
- Annual Fund
- Wisdom of the Hands
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Thank you for your generous gift!



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