

The Wilhelm School was one of the best experiences of my life. I say this because the curriculum and the teachers had a powerful impact on the way I live my life and approach life's challenges.

The school gave me an appreciation for the arts and captured my interest unlike any other school I had attended. We didn't just work from textbooks. We learned about history first hand from visitors and then had group discussions about how we felt about these important events. Writing and reading was an organic experience. Our interests and questions led us to research and read, and then write to share our thinking. We listened to music and then made music. And, we visited art museums in order to study the contributions of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and the Chinese. These experiences were incredibly moving for me. They made me forget my troubles at home and gave me "ideas" to discuss and share. In a way, I became a young intellectual at the school. It was the first time that I was told that asking questions was valuable and rewarded. It was the first time, I had teachers look me in eye and urge me to be meaningful. The teachers believed that we, as children, were capable and had something to offer the world. Our insights and ideas were applauded and reinforced.

I have no doubt that these experiences laid the foundation for my thirst for knowledge. The amazing thing about this is that the school enabled me to discover these things and make important connections about life and what is important in life at very

early age. I began to value differences between cultures, because the school was so diverse. Everyone was special and had a gift to give our learning community.

The primary beliefs that I took away from my Wilhelm School education was that all people are one and that there is a unity in body, mind and spirit. I learned to feed my quest for knowledge by finding most everything a learning experience. I learned to nurture my body by eating well and appreciating that my body is a temple. I also learned that my spirit was strong and dynamic and that a person's spirit is visible by what they create in the world. I learned that words are powerful and I could go on and on with the lessons I absorbed from the master teachers at the school.

It was here that I began to understand why life is beautiful and that it is important to recognize the beauty in everything. My classmates and I learned about the world and its many cultures. We were urged to be selfless and we practiced this everyday at the school through group work and collaboration in the form of student teaching. I am a teacher today because of Marilyn Wilhelm. She is a mentor and friend because she always believed in me. In my classroom, I strive to create citizens of the world. This objective came directly from my wonderful childhood at the school.

It was also at the Wilhelm School that I fell in love with philosophy and went on to study in graduate school. It was my interest in people and cultures that began at the school that led me on the path to earn my Fulbright fellowship and the NYU Dean's award to travel to the 1995 International Women's Conference in Beijing. I was always

thinking at the Wilhelm school, always dreaming about how to have a good life and share it with others. At the Wilhelm school this was allowed, a type of freedom to think. The school had an unforgettable pace of learning, a sort of synthesizing of academic concepts (math, science, reading, and writing) and social concepts of tolerance and cooperation. When I left the school, I had tremendous self-confidence in addition to the ability to listen and learn from others. I have been extremely lucky to have traveled the world and studied at incredible learning institutions. The Wilhelm schools' influence and belief system followed me wherever I went and has shaped me into the person that I am.

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