



It Takes a Village...Innovative Worldwide Curriculum Blooms at Global Village School

By Nancy Gross

Global Village School, a worldwide home school program which has sent graduates on to thrive at California's UCs and CSUs, among other universities, has a brand new K - 8 "Whole Child, Healthy Planet" curriculum.

"It's amazing where we've come from where we started," said Sally Carless, Founding Director and Chief Visionary Officer of Global Village. Sally has a Masters Degree in Education with an emphasis on alternative education. Her BA is in Wilderness Recreation, she holds a California Teaching Credential, and she has presented several times at the National Alternative Education Conference in New York.

Sally very gently disseminates her radiant peace-minded philosophy. At the bottom of her e-mails are all these enormously inspiring quotes, such as this one from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

"I had wanted to start an alternative school since I was in grad school. There are a lot of alternative education pioneers and when I discovered them they really validated the direction I was going in. That was in the 80s. Now I've met some of them," Sally said, referring primarily to the founders of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, launched back in the 60s.

"The best learning takes place when you get so absorbed in something, rather than being force fed. Some kids can tolerate that. . . but I wasn't one of them. I hated school. I felt disrespected. It wasn't relevant."

Sally continued, "We take a flexible and creative approach to match individual

needs and learning styles of students [with coursework] in ways other schools don't. We work hard to let them focus on things that are relevant. We have a progressive emphasis on peace, justice, diversity and sustainability."

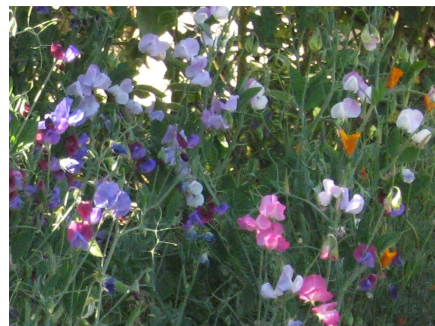
Sally said, "The other thing that is fun is writing personalized curriculum programs. We just got a new student from New York, a very intelligent guy. He has an inoperable tumor. It is not life-threatening but it makes things difficult. He wanted to study neuroscience as his biology." Sally added that this student is interested in activism; for his US History, he will study the history of activism in the US. He is also a musician and a vital music program is being incorporated into his coursework.

Sally said that they have another little girl who is extremely resistant to school, but she loves dogs. Prior to being enrolled, she was spending 18 hours a week at an animal rescue. They have created a curriculum that allows this girl to study the history of dogs, the biology of dogs, etc, and her animal rescue volunteer work is extra credit.

"The kids are happy and the parents are happy when they start to get their child back," Sally said. When a student struggles in a traditional school setting parents may worry, lose heart and run out of ideas. The entire family can suffer.

Sally takes pleasure in helping her students have a full and balanced life. Though guidelines for Global Village School are those of the state of California, and students living in other areas must adhere to the guidelines in their state or country of residence, kids and parents can be creative in scheduling.

"When you're home schooling you can pursue what you're passionate about. One of our sixth graders went to Europe to participate in an ice hockey tournament," Sally shared.





Angel with Sally Carless beside their garden

"I recently went to see another of our sixth graders perform in a national horse show at Del Mar. She also qualified for the state gymnastics meet, and won an award there."

Originally from Santa Cruz, Sally spent time as an administrator in an American Indian Education Program at a school district near Chico. "I'd come to a place where I felt like I was dying in my work. I packed up and came to Ojai. I knew my life needed to be more aligned with who I am and what matters to me spiritually."

After settling into life in Ojai, Sally met and established a respectful rapport with the director of Laurel Springs School. "I worked with Laurel Springs for several years as an administrator. I started with them when they were quite small. That's what showed me what a great model home schooling is for reaching kids around the world."

For a 9th grade Turkish student who goes back and forth between Istanbul and the San Francisco Bay Area, Global Village allows him to study Persian literature and calligraphy. Sally speaks about all her students with admiration and pride. "We have an 11th grader who is a belly dancer and teaches belly dance. She got lit up about Buddhism taking our class, The Buddhist Path to Peace. We have several Native American students. Some of them just traveled to New Zealand recently to do a ceremony. One of our graduates went to the University of San Diego. He traveled last

summer as a journalist in the Middle East. He has a blog, bloggingthecasbah.blogspot.com, and he's writing a book about his travels."

She added, "One of our former students is currently working with displaced children in Haiti. While she lives in the US most of the time now, she and her mom lived in Haiti when she was a student."

Global Village School's 10th anniversary party, with food and live local music, is Saturday, May 22 from 1-4 p.m. at their office, 207 North Ventura Street in Ojai. If you miss the party and want a chance to see the inspiring new curriculum materials, give the office a call at 805-646-9792.

Visit globalvillageschool.org



Michael Preston, Global Village graduate,
traditional dancer, Winnemem
Wintu Tribe

