

HAZEL'S FAREWELL

Dear Jeff and Board Members,

Thank you for your kind expression of appreciation for my years of service to the Community School. I know it is very difficult to find ways to show your appreciation because of the financial situation. However, I feel you all have supported me fully through the years with your words of encouragement and kind smiles of understanding.

I, too, appreciate the time and effort the Board dedicates to the continuing success of the school.

I hope to continue supporting your efforts with some kind of contribution throughout the coming years.

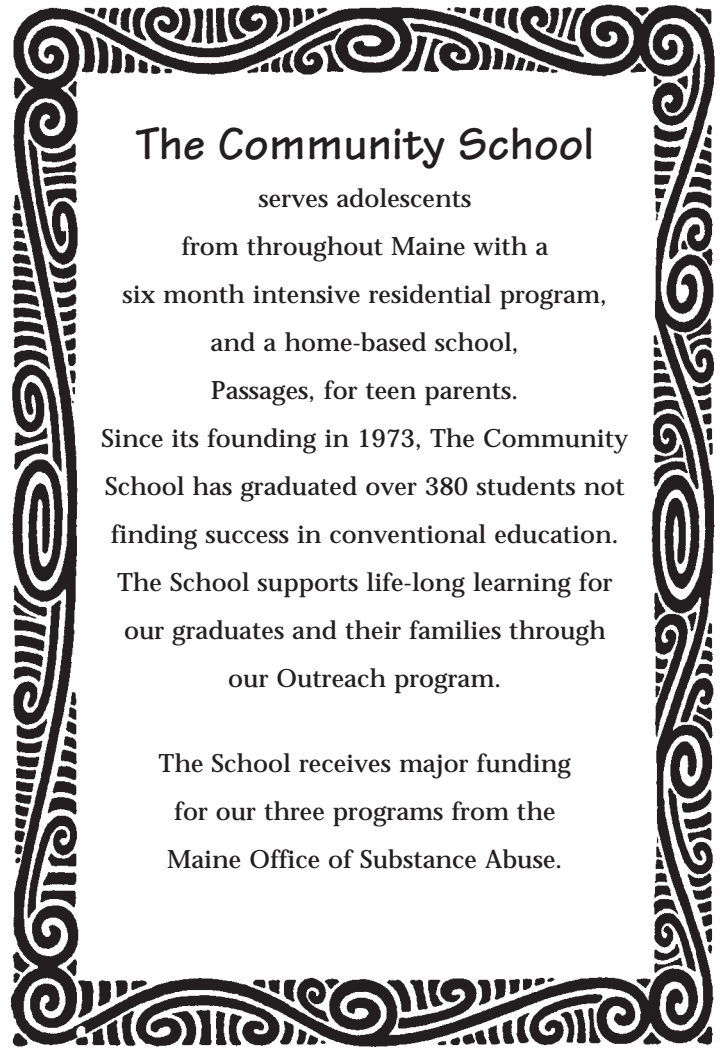
The successes here are almost unbelievable. The changes I have seen in "our" students from the time they arrive and the time they leave brings tears to my eyes.

I also appreciate the dedication of the teacher-counselors. Without them, there would be no C-School. I have seen them agonize for days over the students for one reason or another. I have seen them cry and I have seen them smile with pride on graduation day.

God bless all of you. I am a better person because of you and I appreciate you

— Hazel

(Hazel was not only the School's self-taught book-keeper for eight years but the soul of the new addition. Recently married, she left to live happily ever after.)



The Community School

serves adolescents

from throughout Maine with a six month intensive residential program, and a home-based school, Passages, for teen parents.

Since its founding in 1973, The Community School has graduated over 380 students not finding success in conventional education. The School supports life-long learning for our graduates and their families through our Outreach program.

The School receives major funding for our three programs from the Maine Office of Substance Abuse.

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The Community School

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NEWSLETTER NO. 76

DORA LIEVOW, EDITOR

NOVEMBER 2002

TO THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

(Jeni wrote this letter when it was likely she'd be asked to leave the School. Later she got academic credit for persuasive writing. Jeni graduated in September.)

I am writing this letter in light of recent events. I feel immense remorse for the wrongs committed on my part, and no words can sum up the regret I feel. Of course these are just words, and we all know what speaks louder in the grand scheme of things.

Needless to say, I greatly appreciate all the effort the staff has put into my education and well-being along the way. As most of you know, before I came to this establishment, I had absolutely nothing. No home, no job, no money, no car, and the biggie—no education. My cousin once told me that success is the best revenge against anyone that ever doubted you. In all that ensued with typical teenage highjinks, I was well doubted and was labeled a complete screw up. I knew I was better than that. I knew I was far too intelligent to not get a diploma or even go to college.

Then I learned about this exceptional program. Getting in was the best revenge—most importantly, against all the doubts I had of myself. I have never been as proud a day in my life as I was the day Andy told me it was all going to work out for me. Now, to sit here and realize that I'm about to lose everything because I can't follow rules is absolutely absurd to me. I'm literally disgusted with myself.

You all do have to understand, however, I was on my own for some time before coming to the C-School and I'm really not used to such strict boundaries on what I can and cannot do. Well, I've known for some time that things in my life need changing, and it's all of this that's making me want to take that first step.

I realize now the seriousness of all of this. . . and am willing to go above and beyond to turn this around. It's up to all of you to give me that chance. I want to be able to do amazing things in life, and I realize now that it all starts here for me. I can't afford any more setbacks in life. It's time for me to move ahead, and I'll do whatever it takes. Thank you for your time and your continued effort, patience and understanding. —Jeni

THANK YOU RUSSOS

Richard, Barbara and Emily Russo have come to our rescue with a fabulous donation of a 1999 Toyota Corrola sedan. Now staff can drive residential students to work, appointments and community service projects without using their personal vehicles.

We are so thankful.

BOSTON GLOBE

Enclosed in this newsletter is a reprint from the *Boston Globe Magazine*, which featured the School on February 3, 2002.

ANNUAL GIVING

The School accepts eligible students despite their inability to pay. We raise our needed dollars through an Annual Appeal. Our goal for 2002–2003 is \$325,000.

We are pleased to report early donations and pledges totaling \$35,329 from: William Armstrong, Mary Bok, Henry Chauncy, Molly and Gordon Greenwood, Gabrielle Kopelman, Valerie Behrens, Elizabeth Kononen Berry, Fran Wheeler Berta, Mary Alice Foster, Jenna Labbe, Toby Levine, Diane and Wally O'Brien, Kenneth and Paula Phillips, Annie Rameriz, Susan and Earl Simpson, Deb Wachter, Art and Hilje Zur Muhlen, Bob Garcia, Linda Leonard, Andy McPherson, Emanuel Pariser, Richard and Barbara Russo, Jeffrey Spaulding, the Camden National Bank, MBNA, Maine Community Foundation, Seymour Lustman Memorial Fund, Unity Foundation Seedplanters, Simmons Foundation, Helen and George Ladd Foundation, the Camden Downtown Business Group, and the estate of Seymour Rothchild. Thank you all!

There are three easy ways to make a donation to Annual Giving.

1. Give through the website with your credit card. <http://www.thecommunityschool.org/give.php3>
2. Send a check in the envelope that is enclosed in this newsletter.
3. Make a donation in the envelope that you will receive with our annual letter.

— Elizabeth

OBSERVATIONS

(For Danielle's scientific method core skill in the Passages program, she planned to read about child development, observe both her own and her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter's behavior to discover why, how, and where the breakdowns occur, and try new methods.)

I have tried speaking to Kaylie in a different tone of voice—a much softer, quiet voice. She has seemed to react much better. Kaylie actually stopped to see what I am trying to talk to her about and we work out whatever problem we have together. I have tried not to say “no” so much when she is doing something wrong. I have realized that we get much further when I do this. She seems to stop doing whatever she was doing and does what I ask her to do. I have made more one-on-one time for Kaylie.

The outcome of this is great. She already is much nicer to me. She loves me again! She always gives me hugs and kisses now and she is quick to help me when I ask her to. I have included her in many things I usually wouldn't. Our bond seems to be mending itself again. So I guess it is really just me who needs to change my ways of parenting. You learn new things every day. I'm just glad I am learning the good things sooner than later.

— Danielle

WITHOUT TONY

Tony Bok's death earlier this summer saddened us greatly. Many of our supporters probably don't know that The Community School might not have survived without the early support of Tony and his wife Mary.

In 1973 when Emanuel and I—then in our early 20's—settled in Camden to start a school, we had one student and a dream. Somehow we persuaded Les Bex that we'd be able to pay the rent on a little house on Cross Street. The idea was that our students and we would hold jobs and pool our earnings for room and board. Neither we nor the School had any other source of income.

We began to meet with everyone in the mid-coast area to drum up support and referrals and slowly the student body grew to five. Someone suggested we call the Boks. They had just moved back to Camden after Tony's stint as principal on North Haven. With typical graciousness Tony and Mary welcomed us into their kitchen and heard us out.

Several months later, I answered a knock at the School's kitchen door. Both Emanuel and I distinctly remember Tony's tall frame filling the doorway before we invited him in. "Mary and I would like to help," he announced. We were a bit startled and I recall a somewhat awkward conversation before I asked, "Uhhh, how were you thinking you'd like to help?" His reply was amazing to us. "We'd like to buy the School a building."

Within months we'd found a suitable house and Tony purchased the property at 79 Washington Street. When Camden's zoning board denied our application for a special exception, Mary helped to raise funds to pursue a legal challenge through the Maine Supreme Court. The Boks helped persuade the Congregational Church to house us in their property on Elm Street for the duration of the appeal. In 1978, five years after the School began, we moved to our present location.

And the story doesn't end there. For over a decade, Tony was our landlord. He came by the School almost weekly, attentively maintaining the household without a hint of interference. Finally the Boks overwhelmed us a second time. In 1989, once more in their quiet way, they transferred the deed to the School.

In the last 30 years, almost 400 teenagers have graduated through the School's three programs. Over 50 teacher/counselors have become relational educators and brought their C-School training to their next endeavors. Hundreds of local employers and volunteers and families have become a part of the School's community. Scores of alternative program and educators in Maine and nationwide have found support and inspiration in the School's long success story.

None of this might have been without Tony.

— Dora Lievow

COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY

Alternative education was perfect for me. I used to dread going to school. It was so competitive and I was scared to ask questions when I didn't understand the material. My self-esteem suffered and I was very unhappy. When I heard about the Community School I thought it sounded hopeful and intriguing.

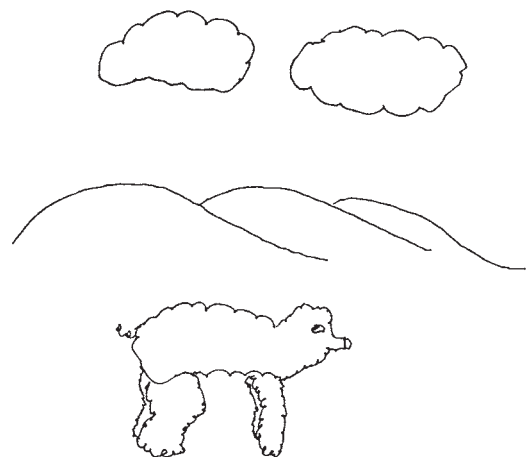
A typical day at the C-School is very different from a public school. In many ways it is more challenging. The responsibility for your education is totally in your control. I was given responsibility and positive encouragement and skills that made me feel like I was doing well. Each student was expected to have a job in the community and rent was required every week. We each took turns making meals and had to have 11 "acceptable" meals to graduate.

In Camden I loved my classes every evening because my teachers made me feel comfortable and they had faith in me, which then gave me faith in myself. After months of being told I was smart I began to believe it. I can now say I am.

In addition to full-time work, evening studies and housekeeping, we all volunteered in the community. I made good friends who supported me and we all helped each other make good decisions. All these things really helped me grow as a person and become a stronger individual.

To graduate from the Community School takes real determination. I started C-School afraid of failing because I felt like a failure. The long-term effect of my hard work is self-confidence. Feeling that kind of success makes you hungry for more.

— Chelsea Marino (graduated 2001)



SAM WONDERED WHY HE COULDN'T
FLY LIKE OTHER SHEEP

DISC GOLF ICE BOWL TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT SCHOOL

I am going to run what is called an Ice Bowl Tournament this winter at my Dragan Field Course in Auburn (I have attached information about the event). Why I am writing is to let you know that I have chosen the C-School to be the recipient of any dollars raised. I don't know how this will do, but I am going to give it a shot. The Event is going to take place January 26 (Super Bowl Sunday). I will be doing 50-100 (depending on how many we think we can sell) limited edition Disc Golf discs. They will sell for \$15 with \$5 per disc going to the C-School. If you could come up with some prize sponsors it would be helpful (the more prizes the better). If the turnout is good and we raise a good amount of cash the tournament host could win prizes. If so I will use them for prizes at next year's event. I plan to make this an annual event.

— Bob Enman (graduated 1976)

LETTER TO STAFF

This is a letter to the Community School staff members, tutors and individuals who have expressed such a great deal of enthusiasm in my future.

My road trip project for social studies is drawing to a close, but the planning is far from over. I dream of this adventure; and with your support, ideas, experience and guidance I have reached a responsible (and comfortable) plane. I now have a more grounded method of preparation for this expedition, instead of my previous intention. My original objective was to be spontaneous and to play the game of chance. With your guidance . . . I have come to realize that I have too much at stake for a vague course of action.

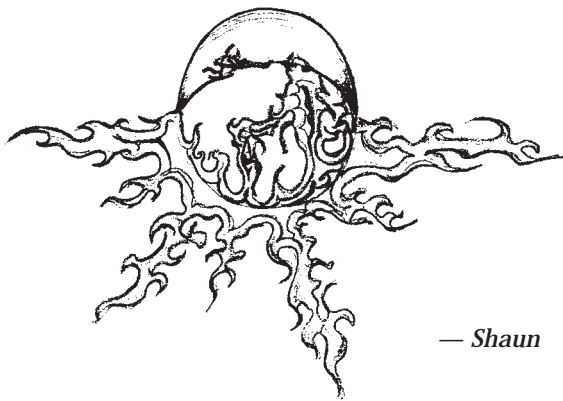
My quest was to discover who I am as I traversed, and that general notion has been adapted. Why did I believe that I would only learn about myself if I journeyed? A truth that I have just recently taken notice of is this:

I am already determining who I am
By what I speak
By how I act
By how I listen
How I place personal standards
How I exert my energy
Etc.

I have realized that I am already growing
Already maturing
Blossoming.

And what I will become someday
Is not unlike what I am today
But I do have the overall selection of
How I will be:
The choice of what type of fruit the
Blossoms will render —
Bitter
Or sweet

So, thank you —
Everyone. — *Carolyn*



A COVENANT WITH LIFE

Although I cannot witness your graduation ceremony, I have seen some of the hard work of both new graduates and staff. You have accomplished something of great significance in committing this daring act of belief in the future. To paraphrase one of my favorite writers, Barbara Kingsolver, this belief is no less than entering into a covenant with life, an agreement to care deeply and act accordingly. You should all be very proud of your very significant accomplishments!

— *Constant Albertson, Assistant Professor of Art,
The University of Maine*

GRADUATION FAREWELL - TERM #59 - SEPTEMBER 14, 2002

I've found that my remarks about this graduation today are very personal. Every six months I take this opportunity to think about what I've learned during the term. The day I come up short of an answer will probably be the day I go somewhere else for my next lesson, because if this School provides an education for anyone it provides one for me.

I began the term emerging from a profound depression, and I'm ending it by falling in love. I began with despair and I end with joy and you can imagine that the intervening months have been a time of much learning for me.

Losing the thread of my own life periodically has given me a particular compassion for you students who, for various reasons, have lost your way. During my own winter of the soul, I found myself profoundly grateful to arrive at the School and know that the effort to get there was of help to my students and colleagues even when it brought little relief to me. So the lesson of the first part of the term leads me to suggest to each of you: Go out and make the world a better place.

Last night students spoke eloquently to me of their respect and thanks for my many years at the School. I want you students to know that for me the School has been a life saver. It's a totally two way street. Knowing that you can help someone is the best prescription I know for despair and a tremendous compensation for hard times. I only hope that each of you will leave this experience looking for the next community you can create or contribute to.

As I fell in love this summer, I recalled a line from a poem Bob read at a graduation many years ago. The phrase is from Galway Kinnell: "Sometimes it is necessary to re-teach a thing its loveliness." I think when we love someone, this becomes our job and it's been our job at the School as well. And this too is a reason to live for and the next great task I hope you students will seek—to re-teach the world its loveliness. Because despite the greed and violence of our corporate and political leaders, despite the many failings of the human enterprise on this planet, despite the dark and mean and nasty side of each of our own hearts, the world we inhabit with those we love (and, at the School, those we work beside and teach and learn from) is more lovely than words can say. — *Dora*

LETTER FROM A GRADUATE

My last relationship taught me about abuse. By experiencing that I uncovered the fact that I have been abused almost my entire life. Counseling has helped me to understand it is not my fault that I was abused as a child and adolescent. Knowing this, realizing that as an adult I have the responsibility to myself and my kids to protect myself from abuse, learning how to do this through counseling is giving me a lot of strength. Knowing that I have been abusive to others as a result of being abused gives me the option to change. Knowing that medication exists to ease the pain if it overwhelms me is empowering. I am thankful for all of it. Mostly I am thankful that there were people like you in my life who cared and who were witnesses for me. Without a witness, there is little hope for abused people who grow up to be abusers. So there it is. Life goes on, if you let it. If you can. — *Betty (graduated 1975)*