

"I was lucky to stumble upon The Cottage School when my girls were 2 1/2

I think they must be the longest running students here from 2 1/2 to almost 7 years old

But I am constantly inspired every time I come to the school for events, lectures, teacher conferences. That is what is so amazing about this place - I am constantly learning and yearning to follow the mission that this school employs.

What is that

I think in a nutshell

How can you maintain the child's creativity without squashing it through all the outside forces that bombard a child on a daily basis I love it when I drive to school and I hear my children in the backseat singing a song that they are making up at that exact moment - how can I keep that going

It is so innocent, so inspiring, so creative - they do not even know that they are doing it

That is what I do not want to lose - and it is pervasive in all that they do and learn here.

This is what I think the school offers them the ability to do.

It integrates their learning into their daily life. They are able to learn not from memorizing but by learning and integrating Music, Arts, Sciences, History, Languages and other cultures all together. It is a beautiful thing to see happen so seamlessly. The kids barely know that they are learning. They love it so much.

I asked one of my daughters what she loved to do at school and she said write poems - now remember she is only 6 years old still. How many children say that. She also loves her Calligraphy and writing the Japanese characters - which they have learned at such a young age. But since they have been taught rhythmic writing since about 3 they can appreciate the fluid motion of their hands which enables them to be so facile with Calligraphy

When The Cottage School decided to expand the school from 1 to 4th grade - I was very excited but also apprehensive as to such a small class. In the first grade there are 3 kids and they are 2 of the 3. It is as if they are being home schooled but with all the rest of the lower grades around too.

I told Laura my concern and she told me that in the first years of this school which was started in Argentina by Dorothy Ling - there too

was only 3 kids and one of them lives in NYC today and is a renowned Landscape Architect in the world. Her name is Diana Balmori and her mother Dorothy Ling started the school in Argentina because she wanted to establish a new way of teaching and inspiring kids with much more emphasis on the music and the arts.

I set up an appt with Diana and saw her in her office in NYC. It was so inspiring for me as a designer of architecture, interiors and landscaping - I could relate and be in total awe. I asked of her experience growing up in this type of school and she was captivating when she spoke so highly of the experience - I immediately knew I was doing the right thing by continuing my kids at TCS

And look where it got her- there are not many successful women in the landscape design world - but she is one of them and I totally attribute it to what she was taught and exposed to as a child. She wanted to offer the same thing to her kids growing up in the United States but alas it did not exist - so she sent her kids to public school and on the side taught her kids what her mother Dorothy Ling taught her in School

Dorothy Ling wrote a book about her experiences and how she got involved in teaching and the method she developed totally from her studies and interest in music . As a music teacher her goal was to "to rouse and mobilize in all students, without distinction or exception, their innate capacity to make music, to awake in them a spontaneous desire to sing, and give them the opportunity to do so, free of all the restraints of knowledge and technique."

And in doing this, it evolved into a whole new way of teaching kids.

Please get a copy of this book

The Original Art of Music by Dorothy Ling published by the Aspen Institutes, University Press of America

It is inspiring!!!!!!

I just wish that I had this type of educational experience that my kids are getting today at the TCS

It is inspiring, incitefull and you see the kids so happy and intrigued to learn and learn more - what more can you ask for?

In order to become more immersed in the school, we are going to Argentina this summer to enroll in the school there in La Plata for 2 weeks and speaking only spanish. There are 26 of these charter schools in Argentina now and this one in the states makes it 27.

They even have a college that educates teachers how to teach in these 26 schools - it has become that popular and successfull. Now

towns come to the government to ask to have one of these schools in their town. So it is constantly growing and touching more and more children. It is a testimony to its success.

So for those who do not know enough about The Cottage School - please come see it first hand, read the book and talk to parents and children who have attended the school- you will be blown away by how amazing it is. It is a little jewel in our tiny community. And it has been so successful that we are even trying to develop it into a charter school- so for anyone interested in helping us in this venture we would gladly call on your assistance.

Please come and see for yourself this amazing school."

Andrea Filippone

Mother of Tessa and Isabella Welch