

What & Where...

The Community Learning Center (CLC) is an alternative school within the Laguna Beach Unified School District.

CLC serves 40 children in two classrooms in grades 1 through 4 with a child-centered program that creates a partnership among parents, students, teachers, and the community.

Founded in 1983, CLC emphasizes academics while promoting ideals that include community service, character development, social awareness, a global perspective, conflict resolution, and more.

The teaching team includes two full-time teachers and one full-time aide, paid for by contributions from CLC families. Parent volunteer in the classroom six hours per month.

And Why...

CLC views all students as gifted. Children learn to think critically and creatively via methods that promote understanding and knowledge rather than the ability to recite facts.

Teachers employ all the students' intelligences through project-based, thematic learning that integrates subject matter.

CLC brings students together in a spirit of collaborative inquiry to explore educational opportunities offered by parents, museums, theater, music, arts and current events, while surpassing state academic requirements.

Through ongoing personal reflection and assessment, and learning problem identification, action and evaluation, students become contributing members of the school community and the world beyond.

Community service provides a meaningful link between classroom learning and the real world. Students are empowered and challenged, have increased competence and a greater sense of responsibility.

Students learn conflict resolution and emotional management, and how to work out differences in constructive ways.

By incorporating personal and civic virtues, along with academic excellence, CLC fosters integrity, responsibility, diligence, honesty, kindness and respect for all.

The One Peace at a Time Project



“It all began with a theme and a vision,” says Laia Hansen, combined third and fourth-grade teacher at CLC. “The theme was *We are World Peacemakers*, and the vision was that kids can, literally, have a voice in their future.”

This project was a natural outgrowth of the *Peacemakers* theme. Students wrote their ideas, images and impressions of a peaceful world and what they could do to create that ideal.

“Their ideas deserved to be heard and remembered,” says Hansen. “Music is the universal language, so a song was the natural way to speak universally and have lasting impact.”

Hansen enlisted two parents, Bara Waters and Robert Cassard, both longtime songwriters, to work with the children, teaching them song structure, rhyming patterns and lyric templates.

“The process was totally organic. The kids even sacrificed recess to participate in our creative sessions!” says Waters. “It was amazing to see the children’s joy at taking their own images of peace and crafting them into a song with verses, a chorus and a bridge.” Cassard wrote the melody and chords, while the students created the rhythm of the song’s rap-influenced bridge.

“The whole experience was magic! We loved the song so much that we invited the students to record it in our home studio,” says Cassard. “In recording and mixing the song, we used a combination of solos, duos, and small groups. The recording itself conveys the importance of both individual and collective participation in the peace process.”

With the purity and inspiration of its message, *One Peace at a Time* has taken on a life of its own. Orders have poured in from people who have heard the song on CD or as performed by the children at local events.

Sales of the CD offer another opportunity for these kids to make a difference. They decided that proceeds from the sale of *One Peace at a Time* would be used to help purchase a van for the Puerta de Fe Orphanage in Baja, Mexico, one of the children’s favorite charities. Once that goal is achieved, proceeds from further sales of the song will benefit other peace-oriented efforts of the children’s choice.

For more information or to order CDs, visit the CLC website at www.lbclc.org or call CLC via Top of the World Elementary School at 949-497-7790.