

My memories of my time at Beach School are full of warmth and nostalgia. Being raised in the protective tight knit community of the island and nurtured in the comfortable nest of Beach school, I felt safe and important and supported.

My fondest memories are probably similar to many others who have passed through Beach School over the many years. The yearly plays, square dancing, singing, tea-time/sharing, community wide cider pressing, the haunted house in the basement and the Christmas ship. These were just part of the fabric of life and school on the island.

More specific to my own time there before I had to go off island to Vista middle school in 1989, are vivid memories of interesting projects and moments that were very unique to this remote island school. I remember a big science project about Pill Bugs that kept us engaged and outside for a few weeks. I remember warm sunny days with impromptu school-wide walks to nearby fields for silent reading in the grass. I remember a fun archeological project in 6th grade where half of us made up an ancient civilization along with their culture, language system and style of living/eating. We made and broke up clay tablets imprinted with with this made up "language" and then buried everything in the trees along with remnants of grains, cloth and other archeological "clues" for the other half of the class to dig up, reconstruct and decipher. I remember capture the flag games and the yearly reading of "light on the island".

I valued the family like experience of Beach School so much that I made sure both of my kids had something similar here in Santa Cruz where I now live. I tried one year of the industrial sized elementary school in my neighborhood before I decided it was worth putting my kids on a city bus to commute 10 miles up the coast for a small town family style public school in another district for rest of their elementary years. The difference in the level of support received, connection, and pride of school was profound.

I strongly believe that our ability to be a free spirit, have a multi modal approach to learning and be a participant instead of a subject during those formative years has had long lasting and positive effects in my life and my choices. It is hard to believe those days at Beach school are already 30 years behind me. I wouldn't be who I am now without the experiences I had then. Lummi Island and Beach school occupy a very special place in my heart.

Happy 100th Beach School!
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