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RUNNING HEAD: The ABC's of the Future

The ABC's of the Future: For the community members of Red Bluff

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Abstract

The Western community of Red Bluff needs a preschool. In 1917 a one-roomed school house, also known as the Little Red School House, was built to educate children. From 1965 until 2003 it was used as a preschool. When it closed, the community lost a historical building as well as the resources to empower preschoolers for its future generations. Ten Surveys were delivered to the community members of the West side of Red Bluff inquiring about their concerns regarding the closure. From the surveys three apparent themes emerged. From those three themes an action was put into place. A letter was written to the current deed holder of the building and the land that surrounds it, to inquire about the future plans for the building. Another letter was written to the *Red Bluff Daily News* Editor to communicate the need to educate the community and encourage them to express their support for a preschool in the Western community of Red Bluff. In order to help me out with these efforts I received a Capstone Grant from the Associated Students of CSU Monterey Bay.



The ABC's of the Future: For the community members of Red Bluff

Setting the Stage

Red Bluff is a small town four hours North of California State University Monterey Bay. Ranching is the main attraction in this community of 30,000. On the West side of town there stands a building that is known as the Little Red School House. This school house was built in 1915 and was the last one-roomed school house built in Tehama County. The Little Red School House educated many children throughout the years, but in 2003 it was forced to close its doors. Since that time, the community members of Red Bluff have watched the building sit vacant without the benefit to even one child's foot steps.

Aaron Walker¹ is three and a half years old and has been enrolled in preschool for the last six months. He and his family live only one mile from the former Little Red School House. It is more than a fifteen minute drive to Aaron's current preschool. Aaron also has a little brother, Tyler, who is starting to enter his terrible-twos. When Aaron's mom, Jenna, takes Aaron to preschool, she struggles to get Tyler into the car seat, Tyler's temperament is changing by the week and he is getting harder to get into the car seat to head into town. In the mornings, Jenna must get up and make her children breakfast, as she sees her husband off to work. Jenna then must hustle to get Aaron and Tyler fed and dressed for the day. Mom then schedules fifteen minutes to make it into the car. Aaron of course jumps right in for the excitement of going to preschool. Tyler, on the other hand, does not want to get into his car seat by any means. Once Jenna coaxes Tyler into the car

¹ All proper names are Pseudonyms.

seat she must then head off towards town in order to drop off Aaron at preschool by nine. Once the 'happy' car load makes it to Aaron's preschool, his mom must take Tyler out of the car seat to ensure that Aaron makes it safely inside. Then the struggle of getting into the car seat occurs once again. As Tyler gets older he gets stronger and harder to maneuver into the car seat. Instead of going right home with Tyler, Jenna runs her errands for the day while Aaron is at preschool. She does this because she and her husband do not have extra money to buy gas at three dollars and ninety cents a gallon. She chooses to stay in town instead of driving back home and then returning a few hours later to pick up Aaron from school.

Since the closure of the Little Red School House, rather than drive one mile down the road, Aaron's family must drive all the way into town. If the Little Red School House was open today, Aaron's family would be able to enjoy a countryside school house that is one mile away and would probably not consider preschool a hassle. I talked to Jenna, and said that would love for the Little Red School House to be open. She also mentioned getting the boys in the stroller and taking a nice walk to preschool. Tyler likes the stroller much better than the car seat. She and I talked about all of the benefits that would come from a preschool out in the country side of Red Bluff. While we were day dreaming, she suddenly remembered that it was eleven thirty and it time to start the agonizing struggle of getting Tyler in the car to make it to town by noon to pick up Aaron. As I left, I could hear Tyler screaming as his mother struggled to get him into the armored chair called a car seat.

What is the Problem and why is it an Issue?

Problem. The Little Red School House in Western Red Bluff was forced to close its doors due to a lack of funding. It was closed down in the 2003- 2004 academic school year because the building was in need of repairs. The Reeds Creek School District, that owned the building at the time, did not have sufficient funds to repair the building. The building needed to be fixed in order to meet to California Code (Wolf, 2006, August 22, p. 1A).

Issue. The Western Red Bluff community's future generations do not have access to a preschool setting that is very much needed. Preschool is considered necessary for many reasons. Preschool is one of the most beneficial experiences that a child encounters. For example, Preschool aged children (ages 3 thru 5) tend to need a lot of stimulation in order to develop to their fullest potential. At a preschool one sees multiple opportunities for physical stimulation, such as building blocks and legos inside, as well as swings and tricycles outside.

Social Interaction. An important source of social stimulation that is present in a preschool that people often do not recognize is the preschooler's peers. Peers "...not only are the best playmates but also provide opportunities to practice social skills" (Berger, K., 2005, p. 243). Without peers at a preschool we would see a preschool as an extension of the home. A parent may set up play dates for everyday of the week, although this engagement would not substitute for a preschool experience.

Motor Skills. Social engagement is a main point that preschools often present in their brochures, but the next most important skill is the development of a child's motor skills. A child must be engaged to their full potential in order to develop all the

appropriate gross and fine motor skills that are needed to move on into Kindergarten.

Gross motor skills involve all of the large body movements that we see. At the preschool level we should see children starting to take on some difficult tasks. Here are a few of the tasks that are looked for in preschool gross motor development:

Walk up and down stairs, alternating feet;

Walk in a straight and circular lines;

Balance while walking on tires or balance beams;

Stop, Start, and change directions quickly when running;

Leap off a hill or climber and land squarely on both feet;

Jump over blocks, tires, or other obstacles, leading with one foot;

Ride tricycles or other riding toys, using pedals;

Stop and start riding toys and steer around barriers; and Throw balls and other objects using the whole body and stepping forward with the leg that is opposite of the throwing arm (Trawick-Smith, 2006, p. 25).

Most families are not equipped with all of the resources to aide the development of these motor skills. Many families are not fortunate to have the resources to provide jungle gyms, swing sets, or even tricycles. This is why it is essential for a child to attend a preschool that has all of these resources plus many more.

As for fine motor skills, the same applies. Parents may not be able to fully support the development of their child's fine motor skills. The following activities involve small body movements:

Finger painting;

Sculpting with clay;

Cutting with scissors;

Manipulating with accuracy the small pieces of a puzzle or pegboard;

Grasping a writing implement or paintbrush using thumb and fingers;

Eating with a fork and spoon;

Spreading food with a knife;

Putting on clothing and shoes independently;

Buttoning large buttons on clothing;

Zippering and unzipping clothing;

Creating representational drawings, including human heads and facial features;

Writing some primitive, conventional letters or one's name; and

Coordinating hand and arm movements with vision, hearing, touch, and other senses
(Trawick-Smith, 2006, p. 30).

In fact, fine motor skills "...are much harder to master than gross motor skills" (Berger, 2005, p. 203), so we must give children the greatest opportunities to excel in developing these skills. It is very hard to start learning how to write in Kindergarten if the child does not know how to hold the pencil correctly.

Early Detection of Disorders. If a child is enrolled in preschool it is easier to get professional opinions on the development of the child. Preschool teachers are well educated about the detection of behavioral disorders, conduct problems, emotional disorders, and learning disorders. It is very important to detect these sorts of disorders at an early age. This is needed because, "children are not old enough or skilled enough to report on their own behavior; parents, teachers, or clinicians may keep records of specific target behaviors" (Mash & Wolfe, 2005, p. 84). Parents and teachers observe different

activities in two completely different environments. For example, at home a child may just sit in front of the TV instead of experimenting with new objects in order to master all of the skills that are necessary. While at a preschool, the child may not only be interacting with other children, but they may also encounter new objects. I worked at a preschool and we used knives everyday; the children cut up their snack. Not very many children are allowed to use knives in their home.

It is also very common for parents not to realize that their child may have a disorder. This is why preschool is essential. Preschool is when children start to develop in all areas. If they are lacking in one area, it very well it could be due to a disorder. Once a child is assessed and a disorder is revealed, the child and their parents can start treatment together. Parents and teachers need to be aware because “children... don't usually refer themselves for treatment” (Mash et al., 2005, p. 80) and this is why it is crucial for parents and teachers at a preschool cite to communicate with one another regarding assessment, diagnosis and treatment of such disorders.

Without a preschool in the Western side of the community of Red Bluff, the children are suffering. These children are missing out on the social skills that are needed for the rest of their lives, as well as many developmental skills that are just not supported by staying at home. These children are also being neglected. They are not being correctly assessed for the thousands of disorders that have appeared over the years. The community of Red Bluff needs to speak up now for their future generations. As a future teacher in the community of Red Bluff I am speaking up. This issue needs to be resolved. Kindergarten teachers may not be able to catch up the children who were not as fortunate to go to

preschool, to the state standards as well as keep all the others moving forward with the curriculum.

Conservation of Time and Energy. Red Bluff is a small town and a fifteen minute drive to the community members is a major inconvenience. I know this may sound silly to a Monterey community member, but in the rural area of Red Bluff, the conservation of time and energy is essential. The children in the Western community of Red Bluff are suffering by not having the appropriate preschool resources near them. It is a very major inconvenience for the families of the Western community of Red Bluff to drive their children into town. Remember Aaron and his mother. Each day they must fight with Tyler in order to get him into the car seat. This would not be an issue if Aaron's mother could put them both in the double stroller and walk Aaron to school. This of course would benefit Aaron because he would be attending preschool. It also would benefit Tyler because he and his mother could also engage in a learning experience in the outdoors. Aaron's mother could simply point out the different animals they see on their walk. This would make Aaron and Tyler's trip to preschool educational and more enjoyable. Today Aaron's mother must get Tyler in the car seat and drive into town to go to preschool. Aaron is one of the fortunate children who have parents that know the importance of preschool, and will drive him into town, a fifteen minute drive each way. But for those who may not be able to afford the cost of gas, as well as the preschool fees; are stuck staying at home without the social interaction that preschool gives to young children.

Literature Review

Opening a preschool requires a large amount of cash. In this case fundraising and grant proposals will be needed to shape the future of the Little Red Schoolhouse. My hopes are that the Little Red Schoolhouse, in some shape or form, can start to raise sufficient funds to repair the building and get it up to standards, but this may take quite a bit of effort.

Coming up with the idea. Coming up with the idea and the need for the fundraising and or Grant money can be the easy part to your project. Most people who try to raise money seem to be obtaining the money for a project that they feel is essential. The next part that may come not so easy is, making your idea public. This can be one of the scariest and of course most disappointing parts. When the ideas are transitioned from private to the public the negativity can be unbearable at times. The most important thing to remember is not to let these people get to your idea and hinder it in any way. One of the fears that also comes with the public is that the idea may be stolen or recreated in a fashion that would hinder your idea from taking place (Blum, 1996).

Dealing with the details. Taking care of the details may be harder than one would expect. The fundraisers must put on their thinking caps for much of the procedure. It takes a lot of exertion to create the idea that will be appealing to others, and encourage them to help you with your plan of action. Before you think about how you are going to get the funding "...it is important for you to become familiar with the thinking behind your organization's funding need" (Shaff, 1999, p. 21). Identifying the estimated financial need is essential to a successful fundraiser. One point that was made apparent by Blum (1996) was not to underestimate your need. The beginnings are just an estimate and it is always better to over estimate than under estimate.

Writing the proposal. Once the amount of dollars needed is identified the fundraisers must then start to write the proposals as well as the letters in order to complete their fundraising. If you have problems with writing the fundraising proposal can be quite difficult to compile. The idea of a fundraising proposal is to “present your problems or concerns as representing a class of problems or as a specific example of a general concern of interest to the founder” (Achilles & Ruskin, 1995, p. 51). A few lines that can be very successful in your letter are the following; ‘You are among the first...’ ‘Don’t you wish...’ as well as ‘I know you’ll want to be a part of this...’ (Warwick, p. 268). Although when we are talking about our needs we should of course consider other methods of aid. Cash and grants are great, although it also may be efficient to consider donations of services or equipment as well (Blum, 1996).

Identifying the financial donors. Deciding who the financial donors will be and donor benefits. After the financial need is assessed then the fundraisers must then start to identify who the possible donors are. “Seeking of fundraising support is an important task” (Achilles & Ruskin, 1995, p. 25). Identifying who will be your main supporters can be quite challenging. The main point that Achilles and Ruskin wanted to articulate was that first impressions are important. When you start to research who your primary donors may be, the first impression is what counts the most. At this point the donor needs to be able to identify with the financial need as well as with you the one asking for the funds. If you do receive financial donors, it is necessary to have donor benefits. These would act as an incentive for the possible donors to invest in your plan of action. (Warwick, 2001). Allowing for a sense of motivation to help out your cause would in turn help out your plan start to take form. Another tip that will allow for investment would be to inform the

potential donor of a sense of urgency, "...send money NOW" sort of thing (Warwick, 2001, p. 111). This would also allow you to get the ball rolling at a faster rate on your potential project.

When it comes to contacting your potential donors it is helpful to contact the person who controls the budget for your area of interest (Wason, 2004). This also would allow for a faster turn around in your financial assistance. Another good tip that would be essential to coming up with your financial assistance would be to contact someone who cares about your project (Wason, 2004). For example if you are asking for fundraising for a preschool, a person who may have preschool aged children may have more of a personal interest in donating to your cause.

Government Grants. Consider the possibility of Government Grants. There is also the possibility of government grants to help out with the financial needs of your idea and project. Researching government grants can be quite mind boggling. There are two main directories that are grand when it comes to researching government grants. The first one is the independent guides and directories to government funding and the second is the directories for certain subject matters (Blum, 1996). For example, if you are interested in an issue at an elementary school it would be apparent that you could apply for education government grants. Another good source to turn to for help would be your local colleges and universities. These resources may be able to point you in the right direction when it comes to government grants, as well as make recommendations on your project and idea (Wason, 2004).

Fundraising and applying for grants can be a long and dulling process, although in the end it will allow for the success in your project. After you come up with your problem

or issue that you want to address, writing the proposal becomes the selling point to the investors. Reopening an abandoned preschool will be a lot of work, although in the end the researcher as well many young children will benefit in many ways.

Methodology

Context. This project is located in a rural area three hundred miles north of CSUMB. In this small town there stands a historical building called the Little Red School House. This school house was the last one roomed school house to be built in Tehama County in 1915. The Little Red School House was used to educate children from preschool to elementary age. The Little Red School House was a preschool until 2003 when it was forced to close its doors due to a lack of funding. The building has been sitting vacant for almost four years without even one child stepping through the threshold that once educated so many. This is why my capstone project was geared towards researching what the community members and parents of the Western countryside of Red Bluff have to say about the closure and possible reopening of the Little Red School House.

Researcher. I am a Liberal Studies Major with a long standing interest in educating children. I also have a Human Development Minor and realize the importance of education at an early age. I have worked in preschools for three years and have become very educated in the field. I also am a community member of Red Bluff and realize the historical value of the Little Red School House. I have known many people that attended the Little Red School House during their time as a preschooler. As well as many children that are being raised west of Red Bluff and will be of preschool age very soon. Without a preschool in the area the convenience will be gone, along with their early education.

Participants. I surveyed nine community members and parents of the community of Red Bluff. Four were male and five were female. The participants ranged in age from young families that were just starting out in the area, to families that had grandchildren on the way and had lived in the community for years. The participants were in a higher socioeconomic status, many worked very hard to be where they are today. The participants were all of a Caucasian background due to the demographics of the city of Red Bluff.

Paper and Pencil Survey. The participants were asked:

1. How would you describe your experiences with the Little Red School House?
2. What do you see as the problem with the closure of the Little Red School House; or what are you concerned about when it comes to the closure of the Little Red School House?
3. Do you know what is currently being done to get the Little Red School House reopened?
4. If the Little Red School House was reopened would you use its resources? How would you do so?
5. Do you think that other community members would support efforts to reopen the Little Red School House? Why or why not?
6. Would you be interested in playing a part in getting it reopened?
7. What do you think are the obstacles/drawbacks/disadvantages to getting the Little Red School House reopened?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the closure of the Little Red School House and/or ways to get the Little Red School House reopened?

Procedure. A survey along with a consent form was sent out by mail to the nine community members and parents in the community of Red Bluff. I also attached a letter stating in more detail what the intent of my capstone was and how they were going to be helping me with a very important project in my school career. A self addressed and stamped envelope was also included with the survey for convenience. Of the nine surveys sent to the community members, I received nine surveys back through the mail complete with an abundance of comments from the participants.

Data Analysis. Once I received all nine of the surveys, I looked at each one individually, looking for emergent themes.

Results Section

After all of the surveys were returned, I took a few days to read them and determine the apparent themes. The people who took the survey seemed to take their time to accurately answer each question. Some even noted to call them if I needed any more information. The themes seemed to portray the need of a preschool in the Western community of Red Bluff.

Separation of religion and school. The first theme that I found in the surveys was the need for a non- religious preschool in the area. Many of the families that filled out the survey were very concerned that there were not enough non- religious preschools in the area. There are currently six preschools in Red Bluff, and three of them are religious based (Glenn & Tehama County, 2007). Tina stated that there is a need for a non- religious preschool in the Western community of Red Bluff. It is hard for those parents “who prefer separation of religion and education” to chose a preschool (personal

communication, February 2008). Tina's sister in law Jenna has a three year old attending a Christian preschool stated, "We are now having to force religious beliefs upon our children that we may or may not agree with, in order to give them a foundation for their future" (personal communication, February, 2008). Schools are supposed to stay neutral to all belief systems because schools belong to all of us not one belief system over another (Kelly, 2007). A non religious preschool is very much needed in the Western part of Red Bluff, and the Little Red School House would be a great location for one.

The loss of a historical building. Another theme that became very prevalent was the historical value of the Little Red School House to the small town of Red Bluff. The building was built in 1915 and has become a large part of the community of Red Bluff (Deed of Trust, 1915). This one -room school house has aided the growth of the small town of Red Bluff in many ways. It was used as an elementary school for sixty years and then it became a state preschool (Wolf, 2006, August 22). The building was used as a preschool for years. Many children walked through the threshold in order to be educated for their future. In the 2003-2004 school year the preschool was forced to close their doors, due to the lack of funding (Wolf, 2006, October 27). The people I surveyed expressed a concern for the sentimental value that the preschool building held for the small town of Red Bluff. One of the community members of Red Bluff, named Pat stated "I fear it [the Little Red School House] will fall to ruins" (personal communication, February 2008). The small town of Red Bluff has quite a few old and abandoned historical buildings that are currently rotting away by the day. It is my hopes that this does not happen to this building, due to the historical value it holds for the community around it. One of the surveyors, Jenna stated "I feel that the members of the community

should group together in an effort to preserve the history of the building” (personal communication, February 2008). The building means so much to the community, it “is a dear part of our historical happenings” and we should not leave this piece of history to dwindle away in front of our own eyes (Wolf, 2006, October 27).

Importance of preschool for children. The third theme that seemed to be present in my surveys was the simple idea that preschool plays a huge role in our future. Tina who does not have any children yet, stated that the Little Red School House as a preschool, “would be beneficial to everyone in the area who have children to have a preschool experience before kindergarten” (personal communication, February 2008). It would be beneficial for many reasons. Preschool age children learn so much during their school years. They learn how to interact with their peers. Social interactions are a huge part of preschool that many do not account for during the preschool years. (Berger-Stassen, 2005). If a child does not learn how to socialize with others at a young age, they may turn into antisocial adults in the future. Amanda grew up in the Reeds Creek Community, but currently lives out of the area, stated that due to closure, “some children may not get to go to preschool... and preschool can be very important” (personal communication, February 2008). Preschool is important for many reasons, not only social skills but also cognitive skills. Preschools provide the appropriate materials to increase the child’s cognitive process. This new “input from the environment provides the raw material for cognitive processing” (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2007, p. 243). They also learn how to express their emotions during these important years. Children also start to understand who they are, what their identity. School helps smooth this process because

every one of their peers is going through the same situation in their lives (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2007). Preschool is a very important time in a child's life and it is very important that we provide the schooling for our future because according to Jenna, "preschools pave our future" (personal communication, February 2008).

The surveys allowed for me to see what the main issues are according to the community members of the Western countryside of Red Bluff. Identifying these themes also allowed me to think about my plan, and what I will do to help the community to build a good future for our children. The three themes being closely related allowed me to realize that the Little Red School House needs to be reopened to educate our children.

Description and Justification of Action

After conducting all of my research and surveys I have become inspired to take an action regarding the closure of the Little Red School House and the lack of preschools on the West side of Red Bluff. I decided that I need to speak out in order to make some sort of change for the future community members of Red Bluff. Who else is going to speak out with me? Jenna said "something should be done by the members of the community that feel it is important to keep the building and provide a school for children in the more rural parts of Red Bluff..." (personal communication, February 2008). There needs to be a leader in order to allow the others to follow in the actions. This is where I come in. I need to contact the owner of the building as well as inform those who matter regarding the issue at hand.

The target group of this action has become the parents, future parents, and grandparents of preschool aged children in the Western community of Red Bluff. They need to

be informed on the issue at hand and the importance of preschool in their area. They are held responsible for educating our future generations. They must have the appropriate resources to do so. The second target group of this action is the history seekers of the Red Bluff community. Historians need to become aware that the oldest one-roomed school house is still standing and may turn to a pile of rubbish if we do not act now! My hopes are to inspire these two groups of people with two different interests to become aware of the issue at hand and help me fight for this historical school building.

I need to encourage others to become involved in their community regarding the closure of the Little Red School House preschool in the rural area of Western Red Bluff. The first step on the road to an educated future for Red Bluff was to research the owner of the building and the land, and write him/her a letter to inquire about the future of the building. I spent a few hours in the court house of Red Bluff to find out who the building and the land was deeded to at this time. This is where I discovered the owner to be Merlin Hatfield, a community member of Red Bluff. I had to obtain the current owner's approval in order to move forward. I wrote him quite a long letter expressing my endeavors with the building and asked him to inform me on the happenings of the building.

The next step was to inform the community and to find out who is interested in helping with my efforts. I decided that the best way to reach out to the community would be the *Red Bluff Daily News*. I wrote a letter explaining my interest and endeavors regarding the Little Red School House to the Editor of the newspaper. I wanted to encourage the community members with interests in preserving the minds of the children in the Westside of Red Bluff as well as the building to speak out. I added a few of the findings from my research to express the importance of preschool in the early years. I

also inserted a few of the words from the surveys in order to express that there are a few community members concerned with the issue. With strength in numbers a lot can be done, we just need these numbers to come together and form a combined effort.

I also applied for a grant from the Associated Student Body at CSUMB in order to help out with the funding that will be necessary to start a proposal to reopen the Little Red School House. One April 20th 2008 I was awarded the 500 dollar grant. I will be receiving the money soon and plan to open a bank account in the interest of the Little Red School House's future. Then once I move forward with my endeavors of reopening the Little Red School House I will have some funds to work with.

Action Documentation

I wrote this letter to the current owner of the building and the land, Merlin Hatfield on March 16th 2008 to acquire the future plans for the Little Red School House and my possible involvement in the manner.

Merlin F. Hatfield
PO Box 866
Red Bluff, CA 96080

March 16th, 2008

In regards to: Property at 20300 Reeds Creek Road

Dear Mr. Hatfield,

I am writing to you on behalf of one of my long term goals.

When I drive by the Little Red School House I always take a glance and feel that I somehow belong there. I have thought that it has been a shame for the building to not be used to educate children for the past six years, and instead it has sat vacant. Now that the Reeds Creek School District has given it back to you, you really hold the buildings future in your hands.

I do not want to see the building abandoned or even demolished. The Little Red School House has such a historical value. I can not see one of the old Reeds Creek Elementary School's buildings not being used to empower and educate more children. This is why I am writing you. I would like to know your plans for this building, and if you do not have any I would love to help you out with that. I have been doing some research, and I know that the building is in need of some major renovations but I am very interested in purchasing or leasing the building from you in the future. I also have found out the zoning definition for the property, and know that this building must be used for public use, although it may be privately run. I am interested in fixing the building and opening a privately run public preschool. I think that this location is ideal and it would be very successful. I would like to be the one to own or even lease such an ideal preschool. I would hate to see this building be abandoned just as the other Reeds Creek School's building, across from Moon Shadow Ranch Road has. It hurts me to drive by that building and see tarps on the roof and holes in the walls; I wish it had been kept up. There is nothing else I can do for that building, but the Little Red School House's future is still looking bright if it were up to me.

The Little Red School house means a lot to me. I am a small town country girl; I grew up off of Moon Shadow Ranch Road just west of the Little Red School House. My parents are managers at the locally owned and operated Tri R Gas just south of Red Bluff. I attended Reeds Creek Elementary School. During my time at Reeds Creek I was often helping out in the lower grades. I have known that I wanted to teach and make a difference in children's lives since I was a child. I went to Red Bluff High School, and during my time at Red Bluff High, I took an ROP Future Teachers class and received many recommendations. After graduating from high school, I went to Shasta College and received my AA degree. As I struggled to make ends meet, I found my self working at the Creative Learning Center, which is a large daycare/ preschool south of Red Bluff. This is where my interest for preschool really started to take hold. I decided to make opening my own preschool a top priority. Just last year I moved to Monterey, I have been working at a small Christian preschool. Working at this small preschool has really allowed me to see a small preschool in action. This has definitely made me even more determined to open my own. I have been working towards a career as a kindergarten teacher, but I feel that preschool maybe a better fit for me.

I would like to meet with you and discuss the future of the historical Little Red School House. I currently live down south, but I can arrange to come up for a couple of days in order to meet with you. If you could please give me a call so that we can set up a day, my number is (530) 646-7032. Or if you would like you can write me back, my address is; 2624 Trenton Court, Marina, Ca. 93933. I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you,
Ms. April Havens

I have not received anything back from him, but it may just take him time. He is an 84 year old resident so I am sure that he has a lot going on in his life. I hope to hear from him by summer time.

I also wrote this letter to the editor of the *Red Bluff Daily News*, Rebecca Wolf on April 3rd 2008 expressing the need to educate the community and to encourage them to express their support for the need for a preschool in the Western community of Red Bluff.

Rebecca Wolf
Assistant News Editor
P.O. Box 220
Red Bluff, CA 96080

April 2nd 2008

In regards to: Community Concerns for the Little Red School House's future

Dear Rebecca Wolf,

I am writing in regards to the future of the Little Red School House as well as the future generation of the West side of Red Bluff. Since 2004 when the Little Red School House was forced to close its doors due to the lack of funding, parents of Western Red Bluff have been forced to waste time, energy as well as money in order for their children to attend preschool. They now have to find a preschool in town resulting in a massive amount of money and time to be wasted. On average it takes from fifteen to twenty minute to drive into town from Reeds Creek Elementary School, now take into consideration that the family must drive back to town later to pick up their child from preschool. Not only is it a waste of time, but money. With gas prices sky rocketing families are spending a lot of money shuttling their children to preschool not even considering the amount they are paying for the preschool itself. Some families are fortunate enough to have the money to take their children into town to attend preschool but what about the families that do not have the funds to drive into town each day for their child's education? These children are suffering because there is not a preschool the rural area of Western Red Bluff; they are missing out on peer interactions which are very important during the preschool years. Peers "...not only are the best playmates but also provide opportunities to practice social skills." We need to step up in order to educate these children in the Western community. Having a preschool is not my only concern for the future of the Little Red School House.

The Little Red School House has such a rich amount of history with it. It was the last one roomed school house to be built in the Tehama County and the community members need to be aware of this. There are many community members that are closet Historian

seekers, one of which who I surveyed; Amy stated "I would love to see it [the Little Red School House] maintained for historical purposes." Something has to be done before the Little Red School House rots to pieces of history instead of a whole story.

I am writing to ask that if there are any community members out there that have such strong feelings regarding the Little Red School House as I do, for them to speak out because much more can be done with an army than a Sargent. There needs to be a preschool in the Western community of Red Bluff, and the Little Red School House needs to be preserved, why don't we combine these two necessities into one and reopen the Little Red School House as a privately owned preschool? Something needs to be done and the sooner the better for our future of Red Bluff depends on it.

Thank you,
April Havens
(530) 646-7032

I did receive a courtesy phone call on April 11th 2008. It was a recording announcing that they got my letter and thanked me for my support for the *Red Bluff Daily News*. During the automated phone call it stated that if they use my letter in the newspaper they will contact me prior to printing. So hopefully I will get another call soon to announce that it is making an appearance in the *Red Bluff Daily News*.

I also received the grant from the Associated Students of CSUMB, and on April 20th 2008 I received this email.

Dear April:

Congratulations! On behalf of the Associated Students, I am pleased to inform you that you have been awarded a Steve Arizu Capstone Grant in the amount of \$500. The committee appreciates your capstone project and efforts to extend the University's Vision Statement, as well as the Associated Students Mission Statement.

Based on the application submitted, we have decided to provide reimbursements for the expenses that we have noted on your application. Please pick up the application in the Associated Students Administrative Office (Building 14) to see what expenses are allowed reimbursements immediately; also complete a Vendor Data Record Form by May 16th, 2008. After the paperwork is properly completed and all of the receipts submitted, you will receive the grant check in the mail.

You will be formally recognized as an awardee at the Associated Students Inauguration Ceremony on May 5th, from 12:15 to 1:30, in the UC, room 115-116. You are invited to

attend this ceremony and meet the committee, if your schedule allows. Attendance at this event is not a requirement to receive the grant.

Again, congratulations and we wish you all the success as you close out your educational experience with CSUMB.

Sincerely,
Denise Huey
AS Capstone Grant Coordinator

I am very excited about receiving this grant and filled out all of the paperwork as quickly as I could. I also will be attending the Inauguration to be recognized.

Critical Reflection

The action taken could have been a bit stronger for my research, but I do feel that the actions hopefully will be successful. I wish that I would have moved forward further and constructed a proposal for the reopening the Little Red School House as a preschool. Then, I could start the appropriate fundraising efforts. If I had contacted the owner of the building and land at an earlier time, I could have worked out a proposal with him to move forward with my efforts to restore the Little Red School House and empower preschool children in the Western community of Red Bluff. I could have already had money coming in to support my efforts. Since I did not get this done at an earlier date it, only allows me to have more follow up steps for later, if I wish to continue my effort in the future. I will be moving back to my hometown of Red Bluff after graduation and I hope that I will be able to continue involving the community regarding the closure of the Little Red School House. When I get back to Red Bluff, I hope to have heard from the owner of the Little Red School House and have had my letter printed in the *Red Bluff Daily News*. I

would like to search the community for those who show a particular interest in restoring the building and for the preschool aged children in the West side of Red Bluff.

Conducting this project has really allowed me to further my career as a local historian and educator. I have become more aware of my feelings in regards to the local history of the small town of Red Bluff where I was born and raised. I am usually bored when the subject of history comes up in my classes, although I was excited to learn more and more about the Little Red School House's history. I learned that anyone can be an agent for change. I have transformed from a capstone student to an agent of change in my small town of Red Bluff. I am excited to return home and take my knowledge even further. I know that I can learn from anything that I encounter. When I first started the surveys I did not think that I would actually take away any insights from them. I was completely wrong. I did know of many of the issues that were being brought up in the surveys, with the exception of the need for a nonreligious preschool. Since I am not yet a parent, I did not realize the importance of non- religious based preschools in Red Bluff. I feel that I also became a teacher to the community members. Some of the community members that I surveyed did not have an opinion regarding the closure of the Little Red School House. I was able to take all of the research and compile it into this paper in order to enlighten the community members of the many problems that are occurring due to the lack of a preschool in the Western side of Red Bluff. I was also able to inform them of the historical value of the building that once educated preschool aged children and now stands vacant and decaying.

This project has allowed me to integrate a lot of the knowledge that I gained within the campus of California State University of Monterey Bay into my actions,

knowledge that I really never realized that I would use outside of CSU Monterey Bay. My overall knowledge and lifelong learning has really developed from this project. I was able to use the knowledge from my Human Development classes which was very rewarding to me. I was also able to transfer my short term knowledge into my long-term and lifelong knowledge. I will remember the lessons learned in this project for the rest of my life. This knowledge is now implanted into my brain. Human Development was a huge factor in my paper, and I will recall these facts for a long time to come. As I was constructing this project, I was able to recall the importance of preschool without even searching through the text books. It was also very satisfying to me to walk over to my bookshelf and pull out a text book from a Human Development class from two to three years ago. This is why I kept my textbooks, so that when I am a teacher, I will be able to look back on the textbooks for help with Human Development. I was also able to develop a stronger sense of History and the Social Sciences. I became a historian, and I appreciated the knowledge that I was uncovering in regards the Little Red School House.

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