

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published October 29th, 2008

## Saklan Valley School Students Travel Outside of the Classroom

Submitted by Debbie Parish



Front Row: Jenny Faddis, Hanna Beckman, Grant Franklin, Jack Ginsburg, Jessica Wilcox, Abby Mueller, Gabe Binder, Haley Wilcox, Elise Filter, Stephanie Jump Back Row: Charlie Thimesch, Michael Lumley Photo submitted

Fifth and eighth grade students from Saklan Valley School had the wonderful opportunity to experience learning outside of the classroom this month. Experiential education is a key characteristic of Saklan's academic program and both grade levels were able to discover this firsthand.

Saklan's eighth grade students attended a weeklong environmental education program at Caritas Creek in Occidental, CA. In total, there were over sixty five students from three different schools in the Bay Area. Program activities were inquiry-based, allowing students to explore the natural world, build community with others and develop self-reflection and communication skills.

Saklan students found themselves living and working with students they had never met before with the goal of empowering themselves to share their discoveries with one another. Upon returning to campus, Saklan's eighth graders reported that they have a greater understanding of their responsibilities as peace-makers and as ecological stewards.

Haley Wilcox, a Saklan student for 9 years, said, "It was really fun! We learned more about each other in one week than we have in our years together at Saklan. It was fun to watch us all break out of our shells and be open to new ideas. This experience has definitely helped me, especially in preparing me for high school."

Diane Faddis, a Saklan parent for 11 years, said, "As a parent, this was a wonderful opportunity for my daughter. She had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of kids, make connections, and step outside her comfort zone. With

the transition to high school approaching, I saw this is as an amazing opportunity for our kids to challenge themselves. Saklan has always provided our students with opportunities like this."

The very same week, Saklan's fifth graders attended The MOSAIC Project in Napa. MOSAIC is a non-profit organization that unites fourth and fifth graders from different schools with markedly different socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic make-up. Students are given the opportunity to experience firsthand a diverse setting in which all is welcomed and respected. MOSAIC addresses issues of difference, building self-esteem and community, and providing students with the essential skills to thrive in an increasingly diverse society, empowering them to strive for peace. Saklan students were encouraged to appreciate each individual's contribution and the value of community.

Two of Saklan's fifth graders, Lauren Quittman and Sarah Dey, said the program taught them how to change the world to make it a better place. Lauren said, "They taught us how to be assertive, not to be passive and not to be aggressive. They also taught us to be empathetic." Sarah was excited to report that "we learned how to communicate with each other and to celebrate diversity. I also met a lot of new kids. MOSAIC means Mutual respect for others, Open mindedness, Self respect, Attitude, Individuality and Community. We definitely did all of that."

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA