

First days as a new staff member

By Alexander Müller

This is Alex from Germany. I am interning this school year at Diablo Valley School and will go back to Germany after that. I am very grateful for the opportunity to learn how to become a good staff member, and I want to share some thoughts about my first weeks at DVS with you.

First of all, starting to work at a Sudbury school was very different from starting to work at any other place where I have worked. Nobody told me what to do, and there was no formal event at the beginning of the school year – everybody just started doing what they always do in school: talking to friends, playing computer games, running outside, serving on Judicial Committee, playing piano, cooking, etc. In a way, this was similar to my visit to DVS this past spring, but this time, I was a paid staff member. I started walking around, trying to start conversations here and there. I felt disoriented and insecure, wondering if what I was doing was “right.”

Since my visit to DVS this past March, I traveled across the USA and Canada, visited five other Sudbury schools, worked on organic farms, and went to the AERO education conference. Along the way, hundreds of people have asked me, “What do Sudbury staff do all day?” My usual answer was: “They build relationships of trust with the students, and they ensure smooth operations of the school.”

Now was the time to practice what I preached. I started with learning names, trying to remember which students are siblings, who are best friends. When students asked me to go off-campus with them, or needed help

getting on top of the fridge, or asked me if I want to join a game, my answer was “Yes!”

“What do Sudbury staff do all day?” “They build relationships of trust with the students, and they ensure smooth operations of the school.”

But how can I serve the school beyond that? In the clerkship elections, I ran for and got voted Attendance Clerk. I participated in Fun Corporation and Tech Corporation meetings, and sat in on admissions interviews. Now I feel that I am contributing, that I am doing something useful for the community. I am beginning to find my place in the school.

I liked what one staff member said to me about beginning to work at a Sudbury school: it is very important that new staff go through this period of disorientation because then they can better imagine what it feels like to be a new student here.

Also, I am very happy that I share this experience with Chelsea, who is another new staff this year – we exchange thoughts a lot. A big thank you to staff members Anne-Martine, Vicente, and Sam for your patience and your readiness to answer thousands of questions, a big thank you to all the students that made my first days less weird by inviting me to play, and a big thank you to all parents for your trust in new staff members!

Meet real Sudbury parents, staff, and students and tour the school at our

Open House
Saturday, October 22
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Children welcome.



Drawing by Coco



Drawing by Rori



The Missing Sun

Chapter 2: The Space Ship

A continuing story by Ilbra R.

Previously in *The Missing Sun* ...

EM, a lonely Martian, loved watching the sun rise and set on his small planet with his flower friend Lu by his side. One day the sun disappeared. Determined to find the missing sun, EM built a spaceship -- and found a new friend named Abby. "What's the ship for?" Abby asked. "Oh, I'm going to find the missing sun," EM said happily.

"Oh...ok," said Abby. "Hey could I come with you?"

"Um...well...sure! Why not."

"Yay!" Abby said,

"Wait," said EM. "What about Lu? What if she gets lonely?"

"Oh, I have an idea," Abby said. She ran around the planet looking for something.

"Perfect!" she exclaimed. She placed a little pebble next to Lu. The pebble had a little smiling face drawn on it with a black marker. "I hope you don't mind that I used your marker," Abby said.

"Don't worry, it's fine!" EM replied. Lu looked much happier sitting next to the little smiling pebble. "Now are we all set?" Abby said.

"I think so," EM replied. "Then let's go!" Abby said excitedly. EM and Abby boarded the ship.

A couple weeks later they found a planet. They decided they'd just look around and ask the creatures if any of them knew where the sun was. They parked their ship near the planet. The planet had a huge gate made out of diamonds. There were also huge walls that went around the planet and attached to the gate on either side of the planet.

They walked up to the gate. There was one guard on either side of the gate. They both hovered above the ground.

"Um, pardon me?" EM said. The guards were in the middle of an argument and didn't notice the two travelers in front of them. "Um...hello?" EM said again, trying to get their attention.

Abby was getting quite impatient. "That's it," she said. "UM HELLO!" she yelled.

The guards looked at her with the most dumbfounded faces. They weren't sure how to react. So they didn't.

"NOW COULD YOU PLEASE LET US IN!!"

"Y-yes miss?"

"Abby," she said harshly.

"Yes m-miss Abby," they said with terrified faces. The guard on the left flicked a switch and the gate slowly opened, revealing a huge diamond kingdom.

"WOOOOW..." Abby and EM said with amazement.

In the middle of the kingdom was a huge castle. The castle had a floating star crystal in between two giant diamond spikes. The star crystal was so bright it could blind someone.

Abby and EM slowly walked into the kingdom. They looked around curiously. Abby spotted someone pick-pocketing a lady and grabbed EM's hand tight.

A couple minutes later they decided they'd get something to eat. So they found a booth that sold apples and bought two. They sat next to each other on one of the flying cubes the kingdom had and started eating the blue shimmering apples.

Just as Abby was about to bite into the apple a creature grabbed the apple in mid-air and ran away with it.

"HEY!" Abby yelled after the creature. She jumped off of the cube and started chasing after it. "COME BACK HERE!" she yelled as she ran.

She followed the creature to a cave located in the deep forest with colorful trees. Abby hid behind a tree and watched. The creature assumed Abby wasn't following it anymore and decided to just move on. It walked over to a big stone wall and started chanting in an alien language.

"Alio smul maci maci sililum alio smul maci maci sililum."

Suddenly the stone wall became a secret passage to somewhere. The second the creature stepped through, the door disappeared. Abby couldn't sneak in. Suddenly she heard a noise. It was coming from her right.

"Who's there!?" she said bravely. But there was no response.

Then out of nowhere came EM tumbling down a hill close by. "Finally I found you!" EM said excitedly.

"You scared me!"

"Oh, sorry," EM said.

"It's okay," Abby replied.

"Why are you here anyway?" EM asked. Abby just stared at the stone wall. "Hello? Abby, are you even listening?"

"Um yeah..." she said, looking back at EM.

"Why were you staring at the huge rock?" EM asked.

"Well...it's actually not a 'huge rock,' it's a stone wall."

"Your point is?" EM said, staring at the 'stone wall.'

"My point is that I think that huge rock is more than we think..."

To be continued ...

Diablo Valley Days ...

While no one day is the same as another at our Sudbury school, interests are being pursued with focus and intensity.



Who are you going to be this Halloween?

You can be a proud supporter of Diablo Valley School.

Donate by October 31 to help us earn a \$3000 matching grant from a generous anonymous donor.

Our annual campaign goal for 2016-17 is to raise \$20,000 to make Diablo Valley School an even stronger place where young people have the time and space to follow their interests and passions.

Every donation, of any size, does help.

[Donate via PayPal](#)* or mail checks to the school at 2824 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94519.

* For those of you reading this on paper, there's a Donate button on our website at: www.diablovalleyschool.org/capital.shtml

Specify one or more of the following areas you want your donation to support:

- Site fund: towards our future permanent dream site
- Endowment: a nest egg for the school's future
- Scholarships for students with financial need
- General fund
- Greatest need as determined by School Meeting

If you'd like to inspire others to support DVS by offering a matching grant – or if you have any questions -- contact the school at office@diablovalleyschool.org

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Diablo Valley School

A Sudbury School

2924 Clayton Road
Concord, CA 94519PHONE:
(925) 676-2982E-MAIL:
office@diablovalleyschool.org

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Thank you!

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Jennifer Mayfield ♥ Anna Kate Moore ♥ Anne-Martine & Joseph Moore
Mark & Monika Pitchford ♥ Chris Thomas

Wish List

We would be grateful for donations of any of these items.

- Computers (current models)
- PS3 controllers
- New piano bench
- Sturdy outdoor furniture
- Oven range hood (call school for details)
- iPod charger that plugs into the wall

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**Halloween Challenge!**

Donate by October 31st
to help us earn a \$3000
matching grant.
Details inside.