

A Hundred Observations in Two Weeks

By Alexander Müller

My name is Alexander Müller from Dresden, Germany, and I had the opportunity to visit at Diablo Valley School in March 2016. I am also running for staff for next school year. This article is a loose collection of observations without additional thoughts, interpretations or judgments. Also, it includes no names.

I have seen 120 eggs getting colored by students, and I colored my own with "DVS" in graffiti-style letters. I drew two Little Pet Shop animals with markers on paper and gave them to children. I drew a Graffiti style on paper and made some studies of Gary Larson's "The Far Side".

I have seen a six students sitting in Judicial Committee for more than two hours. An older student helped a kid get up on the fridge, then the kid happily ate a banana and later voted for a sentence while still sitting on top of the fridge. I have seen J. C. Clerks respectfully asking witnesses and suspects questions. I have seen witnesses telling the truth, in rare cases caught lying. I have seen suspects pleading guilty or no contest (during my visit, some also pled not guilty, but I was not in the room).

I have seen students giving each other emotional support and hugs. I have seen a lot of Minecraft, some Undertale, some Geometry Dash and some Assassin's Creed. I have seen Rubik's cubes solved at high speeds. I have seen people listening to music and dancing. I was part of a jam session with around eight musicians, including singers that made up a chorus about the "Floor Sandwich."

I was interviewed by the Personnel Deployment Committee (three staff

and five students) including questions like "How does your previous reading on Sudbury align with your personal experience at DVS?" or "What do you want to change at DVS?"

I repaired a recumbent bicycle with a staff member, rode a recumbent for the first time and supported the bicycle while other children sat down and gave it a try. I was shooting some hoops, I played "Poison", "Mafia" and "Pantomime" outside – people were taking turns, new players came in, others dropped out, and the game was changed when everybody was tired of the game.

I have seen people laugh every day. I have seen people watch "Star Wars episode 5" and others watching YouTube videos on how to disguise as a Zombie or as a Moon.

I have seen staff helping to write up people. I have seen staff accompanying kids to CVS or Tacos de Pancho.

I have seen older kids explaining to younger ones why you can't just take stuff that doesn't belong to you. I heard a staff explain to a younger kid how life is unfair sometimes. I have seen people cry. I have read a draft of a graduation thesis.

Together with 20 other people, I sang Happy Birthday while a student blew out the candles on the huge staff-made chocolate and mint cake which was subsequently devoured by the hungry crowd.

I have seen staff and students talking about their feelings in front of a big crowd in School Meeting. I have seen the School Meeting Chair calmly

handling the procedures and keeping track of the order of speakers. I have seen people not cleaning their dishes. I have seen a clearly organized law-book. I have heard people refer to rules C2 and B1, among others.

I have seen everybody take part in the cleaning up the day before the open house. I helped clean the parking lot and weed plants. I have seen a discussion panel at the open house with students and parents confidently describing their school and how it benefits them. I have seen visitors being fascinated by the way the school runs; I heard them being thankful for these insights.

We went on a field trip to Concord Community Park; I joined the group that got there on bikes. One of the students made the trip with a scooter. One was just running next to us. A staff member was very cautious in blocking roads to allow for safe passage of students on the way. In the park, I saw the kids running around the playground, doing cartwheels in the grass, and two younger girls play with stuffed animals far away. I talked to a parent about local and global politics. Sometimes a kid would run up to us and drink from the water dispenser we brought.

I saw students leaving their mess behind. I saw a staff member sorting out unnamed food from the fridge to the "DVS free food" refrigerator shelf. I had about six apples and a wrap from this shelf. I made pasta with tomato sauce and shared it. I asked three students what they expected from a staff member.

I have seen a vibrant community that welcomed me with open arms. Thank you to everyone, I wish you all the best!

The Missing Sun

Story by Ilbra R.

Once upon a time there lived a lonely Martian named EM. EM lived all by himself on a tiny planet he called home. EM did have a friend, but only one. Its name was Lu. Lu was actually just a flower, but to EM, Lu was the best friend a Martian could have. EM also had a tiny house on his tiny planet. And his house had a small window so EM could watch the sun rise and set. It was always his favorite time of the day. Then he would always tell Lu stories, stories about dragons, stories about fairies, stories about ladybugs, too. EM had always dreamed of meeting a ladybug and loved to tell Lu about ladybugs.

Another reason why L was such a good friend to EM was because Lu was such a good listener. EM also considered himself an artist. He had a black marker and he drew on everything, even Lu.

One morning as EM was waiting for the sun to rise he realized, after an hour, that the sun wasn't going to rise. EM began to worry. "Where is it?" he thought. "Where is the sun?" Even Lu looked worried. "Maybe he went on vacation?" he began to wonder. EM was worried because the sun was all he had left as a reminder of Earth. EM had travelled to Earth a long time ago, which was how he knew about ladybugs. He had heard about ladybugs while he was there, but had never gotten to meet one. EM kept wondering what could have happened to the sun. He decided he'd build a spaceship and go find the missing sun. So he started looking around his planet for spare parts he could use to make a spaceship. He found a couple of pieces of the spaceship he had built to travel to earth and decided he could recycle them to build his new ship.

Lu watched as EM looked for pieces he could use. A couple of weeks had passed before EM managed to finish the spaceship. He was just about done with the ship. All he needed was the last piece. He bent down to pick it up, but then realized it wasn't there any more. Oh, no! He exclaimed, "Where is the last piece?" But after 30 minutes of looking, he still couldn't find it. EM plopped on the ground next to Lu. EM started crying. "I can't even build one stupid ship," he cried. "Maybe that's why no one likes me." Suddenly EM froze; he wasn't alone. He slowly stood up and tiptoed towards the sound. Then he heard it again. It sounded like someone crying. "Hello," said EM, wiping away tears. EM heard a sniff, then another. "Hello," EM said again. Suddenly he saw two ears. "I know you are there." EM kept walking closer. When all of a sudden a little furry-eared creature was sitting before him. "What's wrong?" asked EM.

"I'm lost. Please don't hurt me! Please!" it cried.

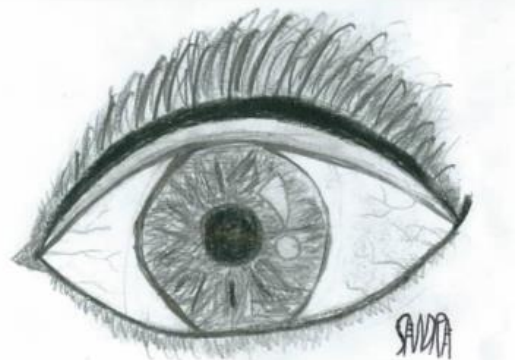
"Don't worry; I won't hurt you."

"You won't?" The little furry thing wiped away its tears.

"What's your name?"

"Everybody calls me Abby."

"Nice to meet you, Abby. My name is EM and that's my friend, Lu," EM said, pointing to the little flower.



Drawing by Sandra

Abby slowly calmed down. "It's nice to meet you, too." she replied. Abby had white fur and huge ears. She also had blue scales that went down her spine and made a fish-like tail. Abby's eyes were like crystals – you could see right through them, as if she had nothing to hide, which made it much easier to trust her.

"If I may ask," EM said, "What are you?"

For a moment everything went silent. "I'm not sure."

"Oh, I see," EM said, sort of regretting what he had asked. "Well, I'm trying to find the last piece to my spaceship. Could you help me find it?"

"Of course," said Abby. "What does it look like?"

"Well," said EM, "It's a button and it's small and round."

"Oh, you mean this?" Abby said as she grabbed a little button out of her scales.

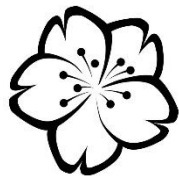
"Yes! That's it." Abby gave EM the button.

EM finally finished the spaceship.

"Wait," said Abby. "What's the ship for?"

"Oh, I'm going to find the missing sun," EM said happily.

To be continued ...



Help DVS earn grants: Participate by May 31

Donate funds, materials, or your time ... It all helps the school where young people have the time and space to pursue their interests and follow their passions

The generosity and commitment of the Diablo Valley School community have helped us earn matching funds towards our goal of raising \$20,000 this school year.

One more time! Anonymous donors are offering to match up to \$2000 of donations received by May 31. Any amount counts!

Here are three ways to support Diablo Valley School:

Contribute your time, expertise or materials. Volunteer to help with yard work, driving for field trips, computer technical support, or items from our wish list. Contact the office for the most current needs.

Did you know? Participation by the school community (past and present) not only helps with immediate needs, it also helps us approach outside donors for additional funding.

Click the Donate button on our website: www.diablovalleyschool.org/capital.shtml

Click the Donate button on our website: www.diablovalleyschool.org/capital.shtml to donate by credit card or PayPal.

Check sent to: Diablo Valley School, 2924 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94519.

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

For more information, email office@diablovalleyschool.org or call (925) 676-2982.

Diablo Valley School is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation. All donations are tax deductible as provided for by law.

Talk to your tax professional about how donating will impact your taxes.

Wish List:

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

- Computers (current models)
- Dress form
- Xbox 360 controller
- New piano bench
- iPod charger with wall plug
- Sturdy outdoor furniture
- Oven range hood (call school for details)

Thank you!

We are grateful to these wonderful supporters who have made gifts of funds or materials to help our school.

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Diablo Valley School

A Sudbury School

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(925) 676-2982

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office@diablovalleyschool.org

Do you want to save paper by switching to the electronic version of our newsletter? Send us an email.



Rain won't stop us



Let it grow, let it grow ...



We made it! (Décor for year-end party)



Together we can!

Diablo Valley School

A Sudbury School

2924 Clayton Road
Concord, CA 94519

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

Open House

*Saturday, April 23
11:00 am – 2:00 pm*

Children welcome.

In this issue:

- Observations from a visitor
- Student creations
- Help DVS earn grants
- Wish List
- Thanking our donors.
- Images of life at school