

Case for CDS

Robert L. Wise

My wife Sarah and I chose Charlottesville Day School for our two children for many of the same reasons, as well as for some individual, personal reasons. We both were drawn to the learning environment, the mission, and the faculty and staff. We knew several CDS families and felt comfortable there. But what really drove me, personally, to want to send our children to CDS was that it reminded me of an independent school I was fortunate to attend in sixth and seventh grade growing up in New Haven, Connecticut. From the first moments I walked into CDS, it exemplified to me the sort of individualized approach to learning, the emphasis on arts, science, and music, and the sense of community that I experienced and wanted our children to experience.

Thankfully, my initial impressions have proved accurate. What I have seen in our time at this school is a dedication to an innovative and transformative teaching philosophy, a dedication by and to an inspirational and devoted faculty, and a dedication to each individual child that makes CDS much more than just a school. It truly is a community.

Part of what helps create this community feeling is CDS's goal to impart in children not merely knowledge, but a "joy of learning." Both of our children have that joy now – in droves – thanks in large part to CDS and its faculty. And our children are not alone. I see that same joy throughout their classrooms and throughout the school every day. It is not hard to see why; the faculty and staff go above and beyond, day in and day out, to make each child's experience at CDS enriching, rewarding, fulfilling, and, well, joyful.

That joy and the nurturing environment that fosters it allow the children to do extraordinary things. I continue to be amazed when I attend a CDS event – whether it is a Whole School Circle, a concert, a play, or an athletic event – or when I learn what our children did that day at school to see what these children can do and the new challenges they gladly undertake and overcome in this sort of fostering environment. A child who may not be the strongest runner will find herself cheered on to finish the race by dozens of her classmates. A six-year-old will brave an auditorium of hundreds of people, deliver a song with full-voice, and be congratulated by a roaring crowd. A child who begins the year with difficulty reading will develop into a voracious reader, pleading for trips to the library and bookstore, thanks to the dedication and innovation of a school that has the flexibility to do things like having an entire day dedicated solely to reading every once in a while. These and numerous other examples, large and small, reinforce just what a truly special place CDS is.

This "joy of learning" and the environment CDS has created underpin not only my personal "case for CDS" as a parent, but also my "case for CDS" as a board member. Having seen for several years what this school is and what it can do for children, I am honored to be a part of trying to help CDS grow and develop even more, with the hope that others can benefit from the same experiences our children have enjoyed. I am honored to be among a group of dedicated board members, faculty, and parents who have so much energy, passion, drive, and dedication towards making this school

even better, even more enriching for our children, and even more of a benefit for our community in general. And I look forward to continuing to work with everyone involved with this school for years to come.