



November 1, 2007

Michele Anciaux Aoki

Dear Michele:

Our two field trips to Seattle with a dozen students each time made far greater impressions on the kids than I ever would have expected. As you know, many of the students at my school suffer from a “poverty of experience.” They simply have not had opportunities to explore places and cultures outside of Mason County. We could have taken a trip to Seattle and seen the city as just something bigger than our small town. But instead we set up our adventures as scavenger hunts to explore a variety of cultures in a short time. By looking for cultural differences, the kids traveled with wider eyes and more open minds.

They still talk of specific details they remember from the trips. Four girls went on both trips, and the way they act, we share bonds as if we had spent a week or more together in another part of the world. One graduate drops in to see me every few weeks—just to remind me that she wants to go with us on any future field trip because her two trips to Seattle were so wonderful.

As someone who has had opportunities to travel to far off destinations to explore different cultures, I have a difficult time putting into words how remarkable a simple trip to Seattle can be to students who have been nowhere but Shelton. I hope I have planted seeds for my students so they will create lives for themselves that include new places, wider cultural experiences, and broader ideas.

Please extend my gratitude and appreciation to all of you who work diligently to promote international educational experiences.

Sincerely,

Susan Barnard

Susan Barnard

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