



A Salute to Toby Dewey

TOBY DEWEY, CRS Class of 1962, Director of the Charles River Creative Arts Program and a former CRS teacher, will leave CRS at the end of this summer to take on a new challenge of starting up a similar summer program at the Cambridge School of Weston.

Toby's teaching career began at CRS in 1970 when he returned to his alma mater to teach in the brand-new 7th grade. He and his siblings had all attended CRS and his mother, Priscilla Dewey Houghton, was a CRS trustee and for years had been writing and producing plays for children in a barn in Millis. 17 CRS students who were all from Millis participated. In 1972 the trustees asked her to take over the reins of the summer program which she did with great energy, dedication and inspiration, establishing the 41-year old program as a model for arts education for young people. Toby joined his mother as co-director in 1981 and became director in 1986. Over its 41-year history, the summer program has been a model for similar programs throughout the country and abroad.

In addition to his work with the summer program, Toby has taken on many roles here over the years, directing the Grades 7 & 8 spring musical, writing plays, helping with alumni affairs, creating the advisor system for the 7th and 8th grade, coaching soccer and tennis, teaching Grades 5 and 7 & 8, serving on building committees for the construction of Foster Hall, the ECB and the Activity Center and always supporting the work of the school.

He reminisced about teaching fifth grade with Jane Detenber and Katie Hutchins during the **"open classroom" era at CRS. "Alums will remember our subway study, I guarantee," said Toby. "After learning about the Boston subway system, students were blindfolded for the ride into Boston, and were then asked to follow clues to visit various parts of the city. Adults accompanied them but were there to keep them safe, not to give any help getting to the next destination. One year a driver saw our cars with kids in blindfolds and called the police, believing our students were being kidnapped!"**

Toby, like his mother, uses a huge range of talents in directing CRCAP, from writing plays to fundraising and public relations. His biggest challenge is running an organized program while allowing the flexibility needed for creativity. **"You have to allow for a certain wackiness when you want to encourage kids' self-expression," he says. That unexpected wackiness was perhaps most apparent in Toby when he taught The Theatre of the Absurd class for many years in the summer program.**

CRCAP students range from ages 8 to 15; they choose their own schedule from over 135 courses **including art, dance, drama, media, music, writing, and sports. "Students get the empowerment and responsibility of choosing their own schedule and feel they can be who they are; there is great acceptance in this environment. All students get to do something they love or try something completely new," states Toby. Many campers come from Boston public schools, creating the diversity that Toby feels is also crucial to a creative experience. Toby's "other life" is as director of Boston's Urban Improv, which he started with his sister Kippy Dewey '60 and Lisa Schmid Alvord '61. The program has the same ultimate goal as CRCAP: providing kids with creative ways of dealing with issues in their lives.**

Toby keeps CRCAP true to its mission of 41 years: process, not product. The key is community and **acceptance, which he says are two of the biggest benefits of the program he's developed: kids who may feel under peer pressure at their own schools can come to CRCAP and absolutely be themselves.**

At the end of August when Toby moves on to start a new summer program, he will leave a powerful and long-lasting imprint here at CRS. And while he will be sorely missed, we can be glad that he is at

the same time, implementing one of the goals of CRCAP: to use it as a model to recreate elsewhere, a unique summer experience for even more kids to enjoy. We will send him off with our gratitude and best wishes.

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