

St. David's Day School, Baltimore City

By Pam Stewart

### Why Do I Teach in an Episcopal Day School?

My journey to teaching has taken me on a very curious road map with jobs right out of college ranging in advertising sales, new homes sales for a builder, stay at home mom and volunteer guru to becoming a Preschool teacher. I laugh when my mother says "Well you finally arrived at the right career. The one I knew you were destined for when you were a little girl" The road was a little curvy but I have to admit I couldn't be happier or more fulfilled than being a teacher at St. David's Day School in Baltimore City for the last six years. The faculty and staff make St. David's Day School a joyful place where children love to come to school and teachers love to teach.

I still look at each new day as a blank screen with the potential to stimulate imaginations, inspire dramatic play and influence new knowledge and to get those fingers gooey and experiencing texture in a shiny tech savvy world. I encourage my students to enjoy childhood and to take the time to laugh and giggle. I want them to experience nature in their play and in their artwork. My students are greeted each morning with a warm smile so they feel welcomed and comfortable in their classroom. I want them to leave each day with new knowledge or tasks attempted and the desire to return with excitement to try it all again. This is the perfect day in the classroom of two and three year olds. I feel extremely blessed to work at an Episcopal school that allows me to incorporate my faith of being a good steward of nature and to others.

Last year I witnessed the generosity and compassion of the families of St. David's Day School. I became involved with a school supply drive called Help Houston Teachers established by Marty Appelbaum, President of ATI Seminars. As a former resident of Houston, I knew what damage flooding can do. I thought of those wonderful schools with absolutely nothing. I thought as a school if we could send a box or two that would be helpful so I organized a school supply drive to help the preschools in the Houston area. I was overwhelmed with the generosity of our amazing school community and their willingness to help others. Boxes upon boxes of craft supplies, educational toys, dress ups, teacher supplies and so much more were shipped to Houston. Twenty boxes in total. It reaffirmed the feeling that I am so very blessed to work in a school where I can practice my faith in giving to those in need and less fortunate and to encourage compassion in our next generation.

Teaching in a faith based preschool allows me to listen and encourage each child and to nurture their natural curiosity, play and activities. It is my responsible to have the classroom be an engaging and appealing environment. I constantly work to change the classroom to showcase children's artwork and stimulate things that interest the child. I prepare for the day's activities but am willing and flexible to alter the curriculum to follow a path that interests the child. I firmly believe the child will learn by being stimulated by themes that are relevant and intrigue them. The learning should be open ended, not rigid and at the child's pace. Childhood is not a race. Children should be able to explore their senses and encouraged in dramatic play. A favorite quote that sums up teaching for me is "A great teacher takes a hand, opens a mind and touches a heart". It is simple, but it truly says it all.