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## Alternative school gives kids opportunity for total growth

By BRENDA THORNTON  
Of the Emerald

We big kids aren't the only ones who must choose our classes and get to them on time without supervision.

A school only a hundred yards off-campus provides its students with an education based on developing the whole individual. It emphasizes human awareness, creativity, problem-solving and social responsibility.

While these may be appropriate goals for any university, these students — aged six through twelve — are mere babes in the educational woods.

Welcome to Magnet Arts Elementary School.

Magnet Arts, located at 18th Avenue and Agate Street, was established in 1974 as one of the Eugene School District's seven alternative schools. The alternative schools offer Eugene elementary students a break from the standard reading/writing/arithmetic educational mode.

Alternative schools devise their own curriculums to meet educational standards set by the school district. Unlike private schools, the alternative schools are public institutions.

Yet even in this established realm of alternative education, Magnet Arts is unique.

"Our philosophy is to use the artistic processes to teach children the basic subject matter," says Gwen Curran, head teacher at Magnet Arts. "We use the arts as a magnet to draw the other subjects together. Thus the name Magnet Arts."

"In our curriculum, music, dance, drama and the visual arts are not just activities. The arts are used to motivate other studies. We relate the arts to the regular work to clarify abstract ideas."

For example, Curran described a lesson on the meaning of the word "opposition." Students chose partners and danced their interpretation of opposition.

"Art makes the invisible visible," Curran asserts.

"Other arts-oriented schools in the nation focus on the gifted or the culturally deprived; they are usually tied in with a museum or receive federal funds. We are a regular school with regular students operating on regular funds. We are not seeking to set up future artists and we are not a therapy," she stresses.

The Magnet Arts staff has



Photo by Erich Boekeheide

Magnet Arts offers Eugene-area schoolchildren a different educational experience.

goals that go beyond the school district's educational standards.

"It is important to develop the whole human being," Curran says. "We want to provide an atmosphere of sensitivity to others, and to develop the child's concept of self. A person is not only intellectual; he is also a spiritual, emotional, social and aesthetic being."

The Magnet Arts curriculum emphasizes problem-solving as a tool in learning to take risks in order to reach a goal. If the child fails to reach a goal, he is encouraged to take responsibility for that failure and try a different approach to reach the proper conclusion. This concept of self-responsibility extends to a student's behavior as well as his classwork.

"The student is responsible for his or her own behavior. They make choices and are responsible for the outcome," she says.

"I realize many schools say the same thing, but here it is true."

First graders must clean up their messes just like their older cohorts, the sixth graders. Curran says the children make decisions every day that concern their schedules and

activities. She explains that once the commitment is made, the child must stick to it.

For some students, these choices create greater educational freedom and a positive sense of self. Other children don't seem mature enough to be responsible for their behavior and often misuse the privilege.

For example, one girl chose to attend a dance class but she couldn't participate because of a sprained arm. Curran suggested the benched ballerina go to a visual arts class, one that demanded intellectual, not physical, activity. Ignoring Curran's request, she began teasing another student. She stood in his way, and then chased him. Curran ordered her to sit and watch the class instead of leaving. She managed to sit still but not for long. Soon she started her distracting act again and misbehaved for the remaining class time.

Can most children deal with the "grown-up" responsibility for their own behavior?

Edna DeHaven, head of the elementary education branch in the University College of Education, doesn't think so.

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## Sexpert Continued from Page 13

lesions — but sometimes there are no symptoms.

Two other points: a correla-

tion has been found between the incidence of cervical cancer and a history of herpes. As yet, no cause and effect relationship has been established. It would be wise for your girlfriend to have a PAP smear every 6-12 months. Also, if a woman has active sores present at the time she delivers a baby, the baby is likely to become infected, and herpes can cause severe illness or death in newborns. A cesarean section will be performed if active sores are present.

It is extremely disheartening to have an incurable disease, even one such as herpes that is

not life-threatening. Resistance to flare-ups can be improved by good nutrition and maintaining good overall health status. Hopefully, an effective treatment for herpes will be found.

This column is written by Planned Parenthood, a non-profit agency providing complete birth-control services, pregnancy testing, counseling and referral for pregnancy planning. If you have inquiries or Sexpert questions, we can be reached at 344-9411 or 134 E. 13th Avenue.