

Have you ever thought that traditional school doesn't work for every child? This was the dilemma I was facing a couple years ago with my son. A bright, seven year old boy, who just didn't fit in well at public school. He would tell me every day that he didn't want to go to school. So, I started doing research. That's when I came across Kelly's working well farm. I thought it was just a farm, but as I got into their website I realized they were more than that. A democratic 'school', something I had never heard of before, was being practiced at the farm. The more I looked into this form of learning, reading about it for hours on end, I realized this would be perfect for my son. Academics were not his problem, the social aspect was. He was also bored with a lot of the subjects they were teaching. Although he was excelling in them, he was not interested in learning only what his teachers were telling him to learn.

In traditional School, children really are not encouraged to socialize, quite the opposite. But here at Kelly's working well farm, children are encouraged to communicate, collaborate, and work together all day long. They are never told to sit still, be quiet (well... maybe sometimes!), or stay inside. They are children, and children need to play. My son never really had a lot of friends in traditional school, but here he's made several friends. He can be himself and the other kids can be themselves as well.

All the parents at Kelly's working well farm know that their child is not being given a traditional education. That isn't what we want. We didn't choose a place that's going to teach them information that they don't really care about, that they just have to learn so they can memorize it and regurgitate it later. At the farm, they are allowed to choose what they want to learn about, what they want to work on, and what projects they want to do. They are learning real life skills, and learning how to learn. These are the things that make the farm unique.

Now we are faced with our farm being shut down by Bainbridge because we are not abiding by 'school' laws. But it's not a traditional School, and all the students that attend here, as well as the parents who send them, embrace what it is.\* It's a farm where our children can go to be self directed Learners. It's a safe place for our children who don't fit into or don't want to be in traditional school. I encourage each and every one of you who may or may not have children, to please help our farm 'school' stay open. We need this alternative to traditional School. Without Kelly's working well farm, my child does not have a proper place where he can learn and socialize with others in a larger group setting. We hope that this issue with Bainbridge can be resolved peacefully and quickly, and anyone out there who can help us is greatly appreciated.

\*Students who attend Kelly's working well farm, aka chagrin valley School, are legally homeschooled.

Steph Mora