



**“Every school has a philosophy. Westmont has a soul.”**

This is a quote by Megan Simini, pictured above with her family, who spoke at The Celebration of Children in April. Megan, a co-chair of the event, gave tribute to Westmont and her reasons for wanting to give back. Other parents present applauded and approved of her sentiments. She put into words what I hear echoed by, and see in action from, our community every day, which is a desire to be involved and give back to a school they love. This spirit of the Westmont community is so strong that it is indeed a living, breathing soul.

When I first came to Westmont, I felt this tug, this special feeling. Westmont was housed back then in the old “yellow trailers” which were synonymous with the early Westmont years, and not exactly appealing to the eye. However, the moment I stepped inside I was warmly welcomed, I saw teachers who showed pride in their work, I observed happy engaged children, I met with parents, administration, and board members who held the school in high regard and took ownership of its wellbeing. What I experienced made me want to be part of Westmont, and that same feeling that enticed me that day has kept me here all these 30 plus years.

Parents founded the school in 1964 and over the years supported the expansion of the school as it grew physically and in enrollment. Our parent body ,together with our dedicated faculty and staff, and our board of trustees, confidently brought Westmont into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite changes and growth that tug what I felt on my first visit, and what that parent spoke about, is as strong today as it was back then. The essence or the soul of Westmont continues to comprise a collaborative community. Our parents, faculty, staff and board members are all on the same page when it comes to how we feel about Westmont and its commitment to children and families. Our community connections are strong and embody a strong alumni relationship among parents and students: Westmont ties are long-lasting.

As I reflect on this past year, I see how the community commitment to Westmont keeps its essence alive and strong. The great acts of kindness shown to our school, our students, and our staff are heartwarming. Parents stepped up to every plate at every opportunity. Throughout the year, Westmont’s Parent Organization showed their appreciation and took care of our faculty and staff. Parents hosted our major fundraising events in their homes. Others volunteered as room parents, event chairs, and classroom volunteers. Working parents made time to come into the school to read to the children, drive on field trips, grocery shop for the classrooms, and beautify the school. Our recent bake sale showed the Westmont community at its best; a coming together to support our scholarship fund.

Thank you all for maintaining the soul of our community. Please join us on June 9 for our Appreciation Luncheon when we can thank you all in person.

Colette