

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Cathy Gruzinsky

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key-Alternatives in Education Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2018-064

Cathy Gruzinsky, a long-serving teacher and administrator at Quest Academy in Palatine, Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key-Alternatives in Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 24, 2018 Location: Quest Academy, Palatine, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:22 / 1.37

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 8, 2019.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Interview being
processed

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Abstract

Cathy Gruzinsky, *Alternatives in Education*, EA-A-L-2018-064

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Cathy Gruzinsky was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1966. She moved to Franklin Park, Illinois and graduated from East Leyden High School in 1984. While at East Leyden she played the cello in the school band and participated in gymnastics and track. Cathy graduate from Illinois State University in 1988, earning a BS degree in education. After graduating, Cathy joined the faculty at Creative Children’s Academy (renamed Quest Academy) teaching kindergarten and first grade from 1988 to 1995. Taking a leave to raise a family, Cathy returned to the school in 2005, teaching kindergarten through the third grade. In addition, Cathy has served as a lower school division leader, technology coordinator, yearbook coordinator, and new teacher mentor. Cathy has been a two-time Golden Apple nominee, recipient of the Helene Bartz Gifted Educator Award (Helen Bartz is the founder of the Academy), served on the Independent Schools Assn of the Central States Accreditation team, and has presented at numerous gifted conferences. Cathy has also taken continuing education units in gifted education at National-Louis University and has taught courses at Worlds of Wisdom and Wonder (gifted enrichment program).

In this interview, Cathy discusses the history of Quest Academy (Creative Children’s Academy) as founded by Helene Bartz in 1982 with eleven students and two teachers. The Academy, located in Palatine, now serves between 250-300 students from Pre-K through eighth grade. She describes the growth of the campus and the student population, its role and mission in gifted education, the curriculum and activities available, student eligibility, school tuition and scholarships, the many enrichment and extra activities (Buddy Day, Service Learning, Electives, Foreign Language, Technology access, field trips, and outdoor education), accreditation, parental involvement, student growth and assessment, and extra-curricular activities. The advantages and challenges being a private academy focusing on gifted education were explored.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Quest Academy of Palatine, IL; academic curricula for gifted students; expansion of the Quest Academy; extracurricular and specialized programs at Quest Academy; role of parental involvement in student education; advantages, and challenges being an independent school focusing on gifted education

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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