

## Aveson Responds to Concerns About June Jubilee, 2009

We have experienced many learning and growth opportunities at Aveson. We are a school with an important methodology and important messages; we are trying to make our way. The families who trust Aveson with their children and give thousands of volunteer hours to our school do not recognize some of the assumptions that have been made about us: that we may have incited graffiti in our very favorite outdoor learning place or that we somehow stand for or even condone the vile things that some artists do with their music.

It is dismaying for people to be making links between Aveson's June Jubilee activities and the tragedy at Eaton Canyon when no such link exists. This bends towards slander and is not responsible. There is a difference between graffiti art and tagging. At Aveson, we celebrate all forms of artistic expression that are life-affirming and holistic in nature. Graffiti art is a valid voice, though defacing public or private property and our natural earth certainly is not.

The artists that were booked by our volunteer to perform at June Jubilee did so on a purely voluntary basis. They were duly informed that their audience included children of all ages and they were instructed not to use profane or violent language or images during their Saturday performance. They agreed to abide by these guidelines and they did so. Unfortunately, one of the performers decided he could disseminate his work and, without permission, gave out free CD's which were totally unacceptable. They were utterly offensive. As soon as parents and staff got wind of this, distribution was ceased, and many of the CD's were confiscated.

We would like to make a public apology for not properly vetting the musicians. The acts were provided by a volunteer who is involved with the label that represents them. In hind sight, we would not book them again. For anyone to associate Aveson with the discography and history of all of these individual acts is unfounded. We did less than our due diligence in vetting them and we are sorry. We considered the exposure for Saturday and not the broader picture. However, we in no way condone the language, violence and other negative messaging that they produce.

Before passing judgment on Aveson, come and get to know us. Come to one of our "Celebration of Learning" nights or see one of our fantastic dramatic productions like "James and the Giant Peach." Read the stories our children are writing about the thrills of hiking and discovery in Eaton canyon or the great garden they are growing on the hillside above Pinecrest. We are an easy target and we are human; but we are doing wonderful and worthy things on this campus. Certainly, we are all learning all the time. If you have further questions or concerns, please call Kate Bean at (626) 797-1440.

~ Aveson Administration