

Goal No. 6 . . .

To emphasize to each child the great personal satisfaction which is derived from intellectual pursuits.



Birmingham Students Speak For Themselves



"School used to be drudgery for me: days drifted into weeks, then months; and I existed in a dream world of my own. I was an average student, far from brilliant, with an obsession for singing and art. Parrotting back answers in class day after day gave me no satisfaction and I became bored and frustrated.

"During my junior year I was fortunate to be assigned to an English teacher I greatly admired. After a few days in class I 'hero-worshipped' her. She made ideas, theories, and concepts come alive for me, and I began to associate them with my own life.

"I began discussing what I had learned in class with my friends and family, trying to apply the lessons to my own life. I found myself literally 'coming alive' with new interest in my studies, and even looking forward to coming to school."

"... Until my junior year, I was under the almost universal impression of boyhood that poetry is a waste of time, is written by idiots and is intended for sissies.

"In English III, however, a tiny chink was inflicted in my armor of intolerance and through it a tiny seed of poetry appreciation was sown. In the past few weeks this chink has spread, totally destroying the armor and the seed has grown into a resemblance of maturity . . ."

"... Gradually but steadily the amount of bugs I had collected rose and soon I had the required 50 insects. I was relieved and happy when that part was done, but my work was not yet over. I had to carefully pin all the bugs so they would look natural and life-like.

"This job was painstaking and took much time and patience but the time I spent was worth it. When my bugs were ready to hand in, I stood and looked in the box and was amazed with the final results. All those hours of hard work, all those days of hard hunting had paid off . . ."

"My greatest personal experience was that of finding myself. I was, I must admit, a spineless slob until my junior year. I had never thought deeply about things. I was influenced by other people and social groups, rather than by myself.

"I had nothing to really stand up for because I had no definite ideas about life. My junior English teacher taught her classes in a college manner. We had panel discussions and class discussions about books, abstract ideas and terms.

"My greatest inspiration came from our study of Emerson and his works. Our final exam was a paper on an idea we had formed during the year. I wrote on why man was not a product of his environment, a subject opposing many other people's views . . ."

"... Last year I signed up for the new humanities course in hope I could get a C and that it might even be a little interesting.

"From the first day of school I had a different, indescribable feeling toward the humanities. My teacher was fantastic and from that point on she took over the lives of all of the interested students by helping them to think—man's greatest separation from animal—the potential to think.

"At first she almost led us by the hand to 'thought,' but now I find myself thinking, arguing and learning on my own . . ."