Remember the moment you decided you wanted to teach? That clarifying instant when you saw the exhilarating thrill in making the world a smarter, more compassionate place?

Sometimes, when the day is long and the pressure is great, that feeling may seem far away. I was reminded of that fact just after the premiere issue of Edutopia shipped, when we received an email from a reader. “Has anyone in your organization been in a typical public school in California lately?” the note read. “Not only is there no money for your lofty programs, there are not even basic supplies, and the facilities are in terrible shape.”

I can understand the writer’s frustration, but I thought the note was off the mark. I have two children in public school, so, yes, I’m regularly in classrooms and meeting with teachers. More important, though, none of the stories in our first issue suggest that the tangled problems afflicting the education community could be easily solved by sending in trucks loaded with cash. Fact is, I can’t recall a single “lofty” program in the issue. At most, one or two required small cash outlays for miscellaneous hardware or software. Instead, most of our articles focused on new ways of thinking about education or showcased home-grown products created and executed by clever teachers with more ingenuity than resources.

Many educators feel they are under siege. Demands for better student performance have grown noisier, while teachers face a world where all but the basic programs have been cut. Some classrooms don’t even have enough desks or chairs.

Educators, meanwhile, gamely plug on. The field of education is one of the few professions to which people feel a genuine calling. The demands are many, and the pay isn’t great. Educators are continually asked to do more with less. But there’s an unquenchable desire that springs from the heart—a desire to change and improve our society and our world, one mind at a time.

That’s where Edutopia comes in. We are more concerned with opening your mind than opening your wallet. We try to fill each issue with smart solutions to everyday problems—many of which don’t cost a cent—and promote the best thinking in the world of education. We look at the big picture and the practical answer, and we hope to reconnect you with the thrill of educating.

Maybe one day our society will get its priorities straight and schools will be well funded, while the military will have to hold a bake sale to buy another long-range missile. Until then, we’d like to help you rediscover the joy in education and see a new world of learning, filled with tremendous opportunity and excitement.

James Daly
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