

October 23, 2008

For Immediate Release

*Valley Springs.* A new documentary film, “Where Do the Children Play?” will be shown at a free public screening at Jenny Lind Elementary School, 5100 Driver Road, Valley Springs on November 5. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and the film will begin at 6:45 p.m. The film will have its Calaveras County premiere sponsored by First 5 Calaveras on October 28 in the Bret Harte Theatre in Angels Camp at 6:00 p.m.

MyValleySprings.com is sponsoring the Jenny Lind School showing to provide parents, educators, and community leaders a second opportunity to see this important film, which examines an issue of growing concern among pediatricians, mental health experts, educators, and environmentalists: more and more children are growing up today with little or no opportunity for unstructured play, especially outdoors.

“Where Do the Children Play?” grew out of Elizabeth Goodenough’s work on “secret spaces of childhood” at the University of Michigan. The film was written and directed by Christopher Cook and produced by Michigan Television. “Children need free time every day to discover their own abilities, desires, and limitations,” says Goodenough. “Open-ended exploration and play in woods, fields, vacant lots, or other semi-wild spaces enhances curiosity and confidence throughout life.”

A recent warning from the American Academy of Pediatrics said children have far too little time for unstructured play, which leads to increased stress in their lives. Causes of the demise of play cited by the group include parental fears of “stranger danger” and the explosion of electronic entertainment—to the point of addiction for some—in the lives of today’s children. These and other issues are explored in the film.

The film is fifty-five minutes long and will be followed by a brief informal discussion facilitated by Karen Pekarck, Executive Director of First 5 Calaveras.

MyValleySprings.com gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the U.S. Alliance for Childhood, a non-profit research and advocacy group that works for the restoration of play in children’s lives. For more information about this screening of “Where Do the Children Play?” please contact Joyce Techel, 772-1463.