



THE HAMLIN SCHOOL
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

January 21, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

For the past two years Denis Belliveau has visited our school to share his documentary “In the Footsteps of Marco Polo” and connect with our Grade 6 students who study the history of the geographic regions in which he traveled. The Hamlin School is a non-sectarian girls K-8 school in San Francisco, and Denis has partnered with our school to provide relevant modules of study that connect to our curriculum. His introduction to the film and vibrant Q&A sessions afterward help contextualize the period of time of Marco Polo and his legacies that have influenced our modern world.

In the classroom following the film, Denis has displayed numerous artifacts from his travels, including an early copy of *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The activity that Denis leads with our students in the classroom is inspired by Marco Polo’s golden tablet that he received from Kublai Kahn. Denis challenges the girls to make a golden tablet of their own out of polymer clay that expresses something they value. Below are a few notable quotations from students about their experience:

“I wanted my tablet to show that I am welcoming. So it has a big tree with words written in the clouds. Peace and love.” - Alex

“I thought it was a really fun. We got to make something that was real and that we heard of in the movie. And we got to see all of the real materials that he brought in. I was, like, ‘Whoa.’” - Laurel

“I thought it was fun to get to make something that Marco Polo had on his journey. It was like we were relating to his story.” - Bliss

“I did teamwork as a value. I think it is really important that we work together because if you are trying to accomplish something it will be better with other people.” – Mikayla

Sixth grade social studies and English teacher, Heather Smith, had this to say about the project Denis led with her students: “Marco Polo’s actual golden tablet was crucial to his success and well being, so I thought it was a great hands on activity to have them make their own. It was amazing to see the girls complete a creative and thoughtful project in 45 minutes.”

We have been thrilled to host Denis for the past two years, and we look forward to how his annual visit to our school enhances our students’ understanding of both history and the global economy of today.

Rose Helm
Middle School Division Head
The Hamlin School