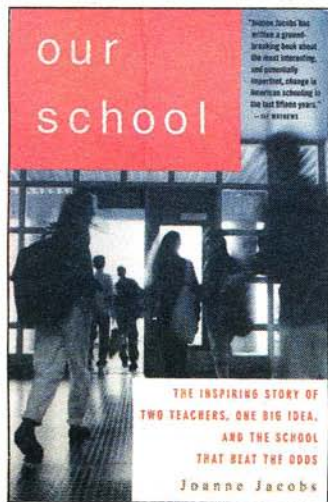


Title Pages

A monthly section on local books and authors, edited by Don Kazak



"Our School: The Inspiring Story of Two Teachers, One Big Idea, and the School that Beat the Odds" by Joanne Jacobs; Palgrave Macmillan; 240 pp.; \$24.95

by Jennifer Deltz Berry

In 1999, when Silicon Valley was at the height of the Internet boom, two San Jose high school teachers decided that if everyone else was launching start-ups, they might as well give it a shot too. Only it wasn't an Internet company they wanted to build; it was a better high school.

At the time, Greg Lippman was 30 and Jennifer Andaluz was 27. The two teachers had been outspoken activists for

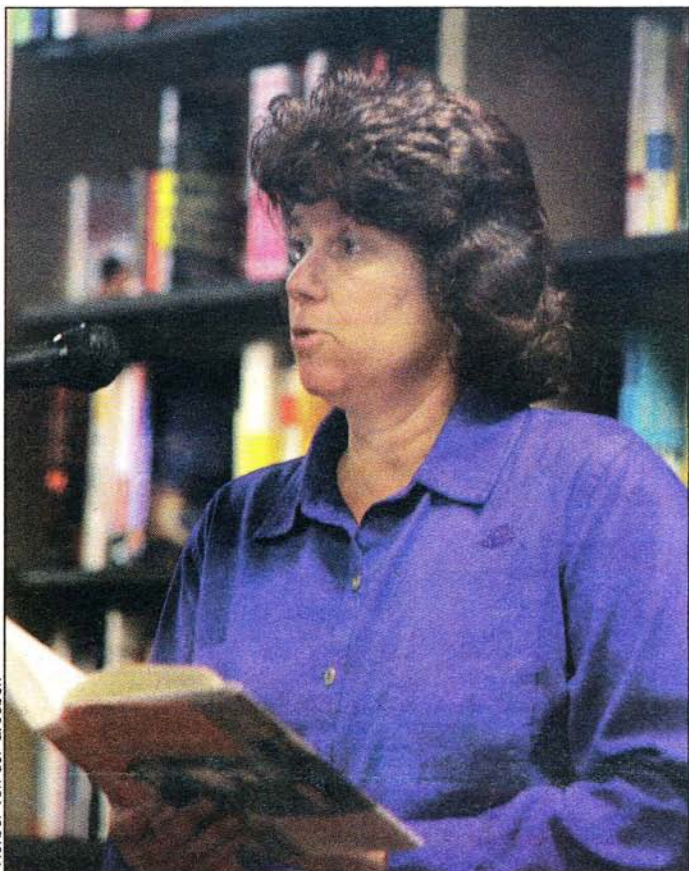
change in the large public high school where they worked, and both felt their ability to make a difference in students' lives was hampered by the entrenched way of doing things in the traditional public school system. So they decided to take a risk. They both quit their jobs. They relied on spouses, savings, or loans to get by, and threw themselves into the effort of building a high school from the ground up.

The result was the launching of Downtown College Prep in San Jose, a small charter high school that opened with a class of 100 ninth-graders in 2000.

Joanne Jacobs' book, "Our School: The Inspiring Story of Two Teachers, One Big Idea, and the School that Beat the Odds" is a fascinating look at a year in the life of this start-up school, which sought to give a second chance to students failing in traditional public schools.

Jacobs, a longtime Palo Alto resident who had been an award-winning education writer and columnist for the San Jose Mercury News, had been intrigued by developments in the charter school movement. She had been following along with interest as leaders from Silicon Valley and elsewhere pressured the California Legislature to loosen up restrictions that would allow more charter schools to open across

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Education writer Joanne Jacobs reads from her book, "Our School," at a recent appearance at Books Inc. in Mountain View.

Norbert von der Groeben

