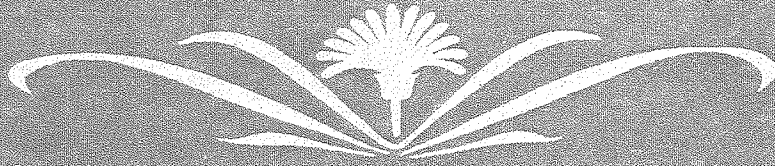


CHARACTER



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“Discovering **HUMILITY** Among the **GOOD**”

adapted from *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*

The Headmaster's Address at the Opening of the Fall Term

Roxbury Latin Academy
Thursday, August 31, 2000

I was at a conference this summer where there was a lot of talk about the sense of entitlement that characterizes many American private school students: in many schools, I was told, the mostly white suburban majority think that the school is really theirs by right, that they are family and that all other students – not white and not from the 'burbs – are guests.

Roxbury Latin may not have that typical private school problem, but I submit we have one that is at least as bad. There is a different kind of entitlement that afflicts no small number of our students: namely, the entitlement that says, "I'm here because I'm smarter than most people." And people sometimes comment that our students can occasionally display an unattractive arrogance and sense of superiority.

Most Roxbury Latin students do have high IQs. But it is also a reality in life that there is remarkably little correlation between high test scores and "success." There are many important kinds of intelligence not measured by the standardized test scores most of our students do so well on. I'm talking about people skills, leadership, courage, kindness and generosity, and the ability to support others. These skills appear to be, if anything, more important to success than the very limited sort of intelligence measured by

the tests our students have done so well on. That is why we place so much emphasis here on developing these other forms of intelligence. That is why we say, "We care most of all about what kind of person a student is." We know they are intelligent by the narrow and confined estimates of standardized testing, but we also know that they need to be intelligent in other, more important, ways.

There is always an element in every Roxbury Latin class whose members seem to think that high test scores exempt them from other obligations. I don't have to bother to be kind, or patient, or generous. I'm brilliant. Get out of my way. Can't you understand that I'm superior?

There are always those who feel that high test scores mean that they don't have to play by the same rules as everyone else. This was the attitude of New York hotel magnate, Leona Helmsley, who once famously said when caught evading taxes: "Taxes are for the little people."

There is an element in every class who think that they're big shots, who think that their high test scores mean they don't have to play by the same rules as the "little" people. One of last year's graduates told me that in his middle years at Roxbury Latin he convinced himself that it was okay to cheat now and then. Another told me how he persuaded himself that he could sign his name to a pledge (regarding drinking on an

off-campus trip) and not really mean it. After this admission, he said, "Please tell the other students what I was like. Please tell them you can never sign your name to something you don't mean, and remind them about the price I had to pay to learn that lesson."

Aside from this intellectually arrogant sense of entitlement, there is another characteristic more widely shared among teenagers: a narrowness that can confine a person and retard his or her development. I'm talking about the teenager who arrives with certain narrow interests and who steadfastly resists any kind of broadening. I am reminded of a boy who graduated a few years ago. He played two sports at Roxbury Latin and did nothing else outside the classroom; his friendships were confined to a small circle of fellow athletes and to the same girlfriend. As far as I know, he never saw a play or heard a concert; he never helped with a non-required service project. I saw this young man recently and he told me,

You kept trying to coax, and later to blast me out of the self-satisfied, narrow confines of my life during my time at Roxbury Latin. I really hated you at the time for pushing me, and I know you thought you failed with me. I'm surprised that you didn't give up on me, because I never gave you any reason to hope. But deep inside, I knew all the time that you were right, and when

I got to college, I suddenly burst out in all directions. Never again will I trap myself in my own narrow life as I did then. I don't know why I was so afraid to change, so afraid to stretch and grow.

Most of our students make a conscious choice some time during their years at Roxbury Latin to be among the good. They decide, first of all, not to be arrogant and entitled, not think of themselves as born to privilege. A recent Roxbury Latin graduate put this to me in a striking way. He said to me this summer,

One out of every 29 people born in the world is born in the United States. Can you believe that you and I had the good fortune to be that 1/29th fraction who had the luck to be born into incredible opportunities? We could have been among the 18 in 29 who are born in places where there is virtually no opportunity, we could have been among the 18 in 29 who have essentially no choices, who are confined to a life of subsistence, devoting every ounce of energy just to staying alive. I didn't do anything to deserve being among the 1 in 29 who were born in this country to all these opportunities. I was born lucky.

This view of life is where all good people begin. The good person starts by realizing, "I didn't deserve this. I have been given so much. I have so much to be thankful for."

Another student spent some of his time working with children with mental handicaps this summer. He said to me, "One day it suddenly occurred to me that I could have been born autistic or with a disabling physical disease. I suddenly realized how lucky I am and how I've taken everything for granted." Some years ago, one of our best athletes lost a season because he came down with a bad case of mono. About a year after he recovered, he said to me, "Before I got mono I took my health for granted. Now, every day when I get up in the morning, I realize how lucky I am to be healthy and to feel well."

A student also needs to realize that there are a lot of smart and good people in the world. When I was an undergraduate at Harvard, I worked two summers laying and maintaining track on a shortline railroad: The Fairport, Painesville, and Eastern Railroad. (I worked on what was called officially the "section gang," the members of which were universally called, in railroad lingo, "gandy dancers.") There were eight regular members of the section gang; I was the

extra summer help. They were all West Virginia hillbillies. That is not a term of derision; that's how they referred to themselves. Not a single one had gone beyond the eighth grade. Only about half of them could read, which I discovered my first summer when I had to look up numbers in the telephone book for Albie, the foreman. He later told me he got his driver's license by having a friend who could read take the written part of the test for him. I was never tempted to feel superior to these guys. They could challenge an Olympic team for fitness. They worked incredibly hard and never complained. They were amazingly patient with me as I learned how to do the work. Most of them lived in shacks along the railroad, but, poor as they were, they would give you the shirts off their backs.

When I went back to college after my first summer on the railroad, I was in culture shock, nauseated by some of the spoilt, entitled classmates I saw around me. I realized that any one of these guys I worked with on the railroad had been given the opportunities I had been given, could have at least matched my so-called "success." Some of them, at least, could have made better use of the opportunities I was given than I did. My experience on the railroad was an important factor in my becoming a priest. These guys — without realizing it — had given me a vivid sense of responsibility. For the first time, I really understood the words, "From those to whom much has been given, much will be expected."

Another thing that distinguishes the good is that the good realize somewhere along the line that they are not the center of the universe. My mother died two days before the Graves-Kelsey Wrestling Tournament and I flew back to Ohio for the funeral, missing the tournament. (It's the only Graves-Kelsey I've ever missed.) Roxbury Latin had only one winner that year, which I discovered by calling the coach when I got back on Sunday night. In school on Monday, I went up to this boy — the only winner — and acted as if I knew nothing about the tournament results. "I'm sorry I missed the tournament. What happened? How'd you do?"

"Well," he said, "we didn't win, but we did better than we expected and we finished well. As usual, we did really well on the back stretch," and he went on and on about so-and-so finishing

in sixth place and so-and-so finishing in fourth. But he never mentioned how he—the only winner—had done.

"So," I said, "you guys really had a great tournament." "Yeah, we did," he said. Then he added, "I was really sorry to hear your mother died."

We talked about that for a minute, and I said, "Well. I'm glad to hear the team did well." And he started to walk away. When he'd gone several yards I went after him, grabbed him, and said, "Aren't you going to tell me how you did?"

"I was really lucky. I won. It was close, I was really nervous, but I lucked out."

That is what I mean when I say the good realize that they are not the center of the universe. When I asked this student "How did you do?" he could have replied in the singular, "I won," and then regaled me with an account of his heroic victory. But he immediately interpreted the "you" as plural and he talked about the team. He remembered to be modest.

Finally, the good, it seems to me, are characterized by a generous spirit. They come at things saying not "What can I get? What's in it for me?" but "What can I give?" Winston Churchill characterized this attitude best when he said, "You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give."

And that's what I hope to be able to say someday about each of our Roxbury Latin students.

■ *The Reverend F. Washington Jarvis is the headmaster of Roxbury Latin School in Boston, MA.*

from the
e x e c u t i v e **DIRECTOR**

Karen E. Bohlin

the **DIGNITY** of **TEACHING**

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from Dr. Bohlin's remarks at the Ryan Library Dedication, December 5, 2000.

When I think of Kevin Ryan's accomplishments and his widely acclaimed contribution to education, I am reminded of George Burns, chewing on his cigar, who on the occasion of his 100th birthday said, "The secret of success is to love what you do and get up and do it every day." This is precisely what Kevin Ryan has done.

Tonight constitutes not an opening but a dedication. If you take a look around you, you will notice that the shelves are sparsely filled and the room is absent of furniture. We are still developing our collection of reserve books and resources.

This library is inspired by the scholarship, leadership, and teaching excellence of Dr. Kevin Ryan, founding director and director emeritus of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC). The work of the Center has always been premised on an abiding respect for teachers and the dignity of their work as educators of the minds and character of young people — with respect for teachers as individuals who have a profound impact not only on performance but also on the kinds of persons their students are becoming.

Scholarship. Dr. Kevin Ryan has written or edited seventeen books and published more than ninety articles on the education of teachers and on character education. His scholarship is imbued with this profound respect for teachers and their work. In his article, "Mining the Values in the Curriculum", published in *Educational Leadership* (November 1993), Dr. Ryan writes

Our students have a major task in life: to become individuals of character. Character education, then, is the central curriculum issue confronting educators. Rather than the latest fad, it is the schools' oldest mission. Nothing is better for

the human soul than to discuss excellence every day. The curriculum of our elementary and secondary schools should be the delivery system for this encounter with excellence.

Kevin Ryan knows as well as we do that teachers are rarely afforded the time and space they need for reflection, the opportunity to struggle with tough questions about the development of virtue or human excellence in the lives of their students and in their own lives. The CAEC's Summer Teachers Academies have been designed to provide precisely this opportunity. As one of our Teachers Academy participants remarked last summer,

I have had many discussions with friends, family, and colleagues about what we discussed here this week. I have had many moments of "A-ha!" You've made me realize things about myself, teachers, and students that had never dawned on me during my last fifteen years in education!

This summer we have three scheduled academies in South Carolina, one in Massachusetts, and tentative plans for a fifth week-long academy in Connecticut.

A profound respect for teachers combined with a desire to help them cultivate their intellectual lives and recapture that sense of purpose that drew them into teaching is central to the CAEC's founding vision, and it is the vision behind the creation of this library. The library will house some of the finest scholarship and research in ethics and education, and will serve as a place of inquiry, study, and dialogue among teachers, parents, and scholars. As Goethe once said, "Talent develops in tranquillity, character in the full current of human life." Our hope is that the Ryan Library will serve as a haven of tranquillity for those educators and students of education who find themselves swimming upstream, a place where they can come to study, to read, and to reflect, either as visiting scholars conducting research or on an occasional basis.

Periodic lectures and roundtables hosted by the CAEC and the Ryan Library will also further this end. Our opening lecture is scheduled for February

15th. Professor Steven Tigner will speak on Harry Potter and the Good Life. We will also host an April Internalizing Virtue Institute for lead teachers and administrators, and we look forward to planning a roundtable discussion with contributors from the Winter 2001 issue of the *Journal of Education* entitled, "Can Virtue Be Taught at the University?"

Leadership. From Education Week to National Public Radio, Dr. Ryan is recognized as an authoritative leader in the field of character and moral education. He has helped to restore its integral and priority place in teaching, learning, and the culture of schools. Most recently, Dr. Ryan was recognized as the distinguished recipient of the Sanford N. McDonnell Lifetime Achievement Award. The CAEC and the Ryan Library also seek to promote leadership. Through its biannual institutes and consultation with various state departments of education and school districts, the library will host international scholars, school leaders, and exemplary teachers, helping them to deepen their understanding of character education and inspiring them to develop the confidence, competence, and vision they need to serve as leaders in their respective school communities.

Teaching Excellence. Kevin Ryan personifies teaching excellence. Well-respected and admired by his students, he is also the recipient of the 1989 Boston University Teacher-Scholar Award. A former high school teacher and a frequent visitor of schools, Kevin Ryan is hardly naive to the practical demands and complexity of day to day life in classrooms. Nor has the CAEC been naive about aspiring to provide quick-fixes or a simple how-to

the **MORAL** of the **STORIES**

HARRY POTTER and the **GOOD LIFE**

lecture draws mass of muggles *by Hope Green*

guide to successful character development. Nevertheless, Kevin has always respected the need to provide teachers and parents with some practical strategies and resources. The Ryan Library will make available for review exemplary curricular materials as well as portfolios from nationally recognized Schools of Character, an awards program sponsored by the Character Education Partnership in collaboration with the CAEC these past three years.

We dedicate this Library in Kevin Ryan's name with the express purpose of promoting scholarship, leadership, and teaching excellence in character education. We thank Dr. Ryan for the legacy of his work and aspire to retain through all the initiatives of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character and Ryan Library a vision that inspires and sustains the dignity of teaching and character formation.

The Ryan Library is now open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday as a resource to the university community and the School of Education as well as to the ever-widening circle of national and international contacts of the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character. Please come to visit.

The renovation of space for the Ryan Library was made possible by the generous support of the Full Circle Foundation, the Boston University School of Education and CAEC friends.

Editor's note: This article ran in the BU Bridge shortly after the opening lecture of the Ryan Library for Ethics and Education at the CAEC. We would like to thank Hope Green and the staff of the Bridge for permitting us to reprint it here.

Greek philosophy scholar Steven Tigner felt he had more important things to read than J.K. Rowling's phenomenally popular Harry Potter books. But the best-selling children's series so fascinated his undergraduate students at the School of Education that one day he reluctantly opened up the first volume, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."

"Like so many astonished adults both before me and after, I was soon ensorcelled," says Tigner, whose February 15 lecture, Harry Potter and the Good Life, drew an overflow crowd to the Ryan Library in SED's Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character. "The ways in which Rowling's imagination harmonizes with the moral insights we find in Plato and Aristotle are really quite remarkable."

Rowling may have her detractors, but Tigner, SED adjunct professor and author of several articles on character education, is not one of them. Critics have charged that her books lure children into the occult, have an anti-family bias, promote sexism, are too violent, and have scant literary merit. Tigner dismisses all such claims with the speed of a Firebolt (an expensive racing broom Harry craves, but sensibly resists buying), for debunking critics is not the objective of Tigner's Potter analysis. His aim is to cast a scholarly eye on these contemporary books and demonstrate how the narrative echoes the ideas of ancient thinkers, especially where character virtues such as temperance, wisdom, courage, and responsibility are concerned.

"Although J.K. Rowling does say these are moral stories, I don't think it is her intention to moralize," Tigner says. "I think a background in the classics, Plato and Aristotle in particular, gives us what we need to discern what's really going on morally in these stories and what children can get out of them."

For the uninitiated, Harry Potter is an orphaned British lad whose wizard parents were killed in a

magical attack by the evil Lord Voldemort when he was an infant. It is not until Harry turns 11 that another wizard, the virtuous and wise Albus Dumbledore, visits the Muggle, or mortal, world to reveal the truth about the boy's heritage. Escaping the nasty relatives who have raised him, the young hero finds friends at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and learns about good and evil through interactions with fantastic characters.

The term "good life" in the title of Tigner's presentation refers to a life lived virtuously, apart from one's relative wealth. In his analysis, Tigner looks at all four volumes in the Harry Potter series, drawing parallels between quotes from the Bible, Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, and other classic literature with the language in Rowling's books. For example, he cites Aristotle's definition of moral virtue as a state of character concerned with choice, then quotes the second volume of the Potter series when Dumbledore says, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

On the subject of temperance, Tigner finds that the contrast between Harry and his gluttonous cousin, Dudley Dursley, resonates with the writings of Plato. Dudley was given every opportunity and aid to indulge himself, did so, and became perfectly horrible, Tigner says. Harry, on the other hand, never given any more than the bare essentials, grew temperate and won our sympathy. Harry and Dudley are like the citizens of Plato's two cities, the frugal, healthy city, and the luxurious, unhealthy one, living side by side.

Tigner teaches two Cultural Foundations for Educators courses, which introduce teacher trainees in early childhood and elementary education to classic literature and art.

"If I ever were to teach a third course," he says, "it would go up into the 21st century and would certainly include Harry Potter. The books are useful in studying how literature can provide moral insight," he says, "because far more of my students are into Harry Potter than are into Plato and Aristotle. Learning how to make the moral connection is salutary for the soul."

Building **CHARACTER** through **ASIAN RITUALS** and **ROUTINES** :

The Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School Experience *By Chi Tschang and Laurie Wittlinger*

The Academy of the Pacific Rim is a public, tuition-free charter school that unambiguously strives to empower Boston students to achieve the highest academic and personal standards in school and in life. Ever since the founding in 1997, the school's means to this end has been to combine the best educational ideas and practices of the Far East – rigorous standards, strict discipline, a strong emphasis on effort and a highly-intentional character education program – and the West – a commitment to creativity and diversity. Despite the school's unique mission, culture, and program (for example, students are uniformed and in class from 8 AM to 4 PM 210 days a year) we believe that some of our best practices can, and indeed, should, be successfully implemented in other schools.

An underlying belief at the Academy, distinctively Asian in origin, is the idea that character can, and must, be developed and self-perfected in students. Perhaps best put by Spencer Blasdale, the Director and a founding teacher of the Academy, character education is as important to the mission of our school as academic performance in core classes, "First, we have a culture infused with programs and structures that build character...From our discipline program to our gambatte awards, to our classroom structure, we teach character. Period. Second, this [in turn] allows for great teachers to design great learning experiences."

At the Academy of the Pacific Rim, character is developed through a commitment to habitual actions manifesting the seven character virtues: respect, responsibility, courage, diligence, integrity, perseverance, and duty. Character is not something that can be built or fixed in one day. In other words, merely painting the inspirational words of great thinkers like Aristotle and Confucius or dedicating one day to discussing character is not enough. Without a full commitment to routines that

embody the seven character virtues, character education is a moot point. Daily routines and rituals are the necessary venue through which character is taught.

The Academy has borrowed from the Confucian tradition of teaching virtue through ritualization. Rituals provide physical manifestations of virtue that help students to internalize good character. Confucius taught that one could only truly understand virtue through a lifelong dedication to self-perfection. Character education, then, is not a sprint to the finish line, but rather a long, seemingly endless marathon. Therefore, time must be intentionally set aside within the daily schedule to include such rituals. We would like to focus on the following five rituals that, when successfully implemented, can help build character: current events, opening ceremony, hansei reflection journals, cleaning or zhengli, and faculty research groups.

1. Current Events

Every week, a current events article from a newspaper, magazine, or internet source is selected by a faculty member. An hour of time within the homeroom is dedicated every Monday afternoon to reading and discussing the article. Each article and the accompanying discussion questions emphasize real life situations in which courage, responsibility, integrity, and other qualities are exhibited. On occasion, current events discussions have been led by an upper grade class as a leadership exercise.

The current events curriculum allows for moral and ethical conversation to occur within the planned curriculum. Articles not only apply singularly to the seven character virtues, but also to the larger idea of community. The articles provide tangible connections from the students' immediate community to the larger local and global community.

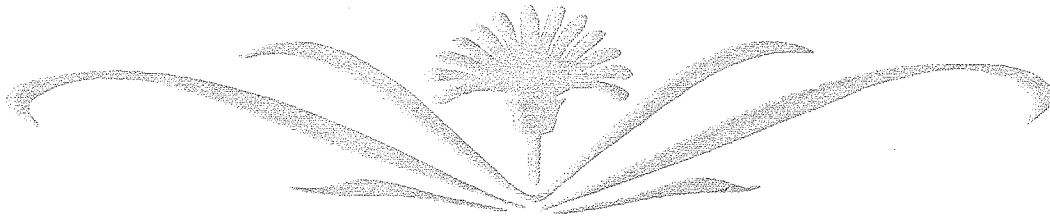
2. Opening Ceremony

Four mornings a week, the entire school community, consisting of all students and faculty, meets together in the common room for an opening ceremony to begin the day. At the end of each ceremony, a teacher presents a Gambatte Award to a student who has demonstrated behavior embodying excellence or strong character. The word "Gambatte" is a Japanese word, when translated, means "to persevere" or "fight to the end". The catch phrase "good luck" is a phrase absent from the vocabulary of all members of the Academy. We do not believe it is by luck one achieves one's goals but rather through perseverance, diligence, and a strong will to succeed. For example, before a test, a sporting event, or drama production, a teacher will say gambatte instead of good luck. At opening ceremonies, a student, seen as the embodiment of a particular virtue, is praised publicly.

The award is taken very seriously by students and teachers as a metonym for success through hard work and effort. Gambatte, however, has become more than a daily acknowledgment or phrase. Students have internalized the meaning of success through practicing perseverance. Furthermore, the celebration of success brings the community together to respect and promote the vitality of such virtues among its members.

3. Hansei Journal Reflections

Students are encouraged, through writing or drawing, to express their own interpretations of intrinsic values. Sixth grade students construct their own reflection journals called hansei journals and are given time once a week to reflect upon a particular issue of character or virtue. Every Friday during advisory meetings, time is set aside for



students to think critically about themselves and to reflect in their hansei journals. Later, students share their writings with their homerooms.

The goal of student reflection is not to train students to write what teachers want to hear. Rather, students are asked to use these journals as a tool for self-evaluation and personal goal setting via the seven virtues.

4. Cleaning--Zhengli

Cleaning time, referred to in Chinese as zhengli, is structured within the schedule every day before and after lunch as well as before dismissal. Lists of cleaning responsibilities are posted in each homeroom and remain the same for each room. No one is finished cleaning until every job is done. Students are collectively held responsible for the cleaning process. Students who finish early are given another job until everyone has finished. The cleaning time, when used effectively, should take no more than ten to fifteen minutes.

Like other daily rituals, cleaning is taken seriously and is also used as a springboard for discussing and developing values surrounding respect for ones community and environment, duty, and responsibility. Students are held responsible for the maintenance of their surrounding environment as there are no janitors to pick up after them.

5. Faculty Research Group

Within the hectic daily schedule of teachers and administrators, it is difficult to find time to reflect upon what we do. Little time, if ever, is dedicated to stepping outside the mandate of time and schedules to constructively reflect upon what could be done better to serve the students. Over the course of two trimesters, five teachers meet

every Wednesday morning before school to discuss and reflect upon weekly readings. Readings focus primarily on issues of Asian based education philosophies and practices, including character education, in an attempt to learn from and implement some of the most useful models at APR. Each week, a different teacher is responsible for preparing a presentation based on a particular reading. Discussion and reflection follow the presentation. We have read and discussed over 8 books and 12 articles in a 13-week period.

The Academy has found tremendous success in its commitment to foster character development. Since students are aware of the clearly defined expectations – largely through routines – character is infused directly into every day. Through hansei reflection and current events, students privately consider and publicly share their thoughts on the meanings of the virtues; through gambatte, students learn the meaning of perseverance, diligence, and integrity; by cleaning, students learn the value of duty, respect and responsibility for ones community.

While difficult to quantify in terms of numbers, the breadth and success of the Academy's commitment to character education is embodied within the daily routines. Visitors to the school are often surprised or taken aback by the kind, respectful manners of the students. The following observation is taken from the state site visit report in May, 2000:

"From all we observed it is clear that the Academy's students do adhere to and uphold the school's rigorous code of conduct. We are

impressed by the respectful tone of students and their role in sustaining a school environment that is purposeful, respectful, supportive of individuals (whether students or staff), and safe."

Jacquelyn Ko-Hoerres, a tenth grader, said this about the daily rituals at the Academy: "The rituals are important for the younger students who come to the Academy. For example, students need intense discipline and look forward to being rewarded for hard work and character with the Gambatte award. But now, as I get older, I do it for myself. Nobody else is going to get me into college."

As we make our way into the new century, we are faced with many challenges in schools. Families, educators, and students meet new conflicts on a daily basis. However, within many communities, teachers, families, and students are shaping alliances that strengthen commitment to teaching character – resulting in the development of moral virtues, better academics, and a stronger community. We at the Academy of the Pacific Rim believe that, if done well, character education can and will create a positive community in which students are better prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the new century.

■ *Chi Tschang is a sixth grade history teacher and Laurie Wittlinger is a high school Chinese teacher. Both teach at the Academy of the Pacific Rim in Boston, MA.*

From a **PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE...**

Promoting **PEACE** By Joy Ellebrecht

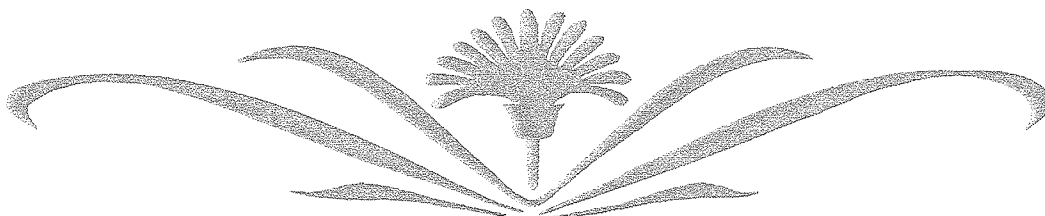
I helped to start a parent volunteer group called PEACE (Parents Engaged and Active for their Children's Environment) because I was concerned about safety and overcrowding at my daughter's middle school. An incident had also taken place at the school exactly one month after the Columbine shootings. Two boys were caught planning a "bigger and better" Columbine and were subsequently expelled. Bomb-making materials and weapons were found in their homes, and both were arrested. I was concerned that the environment at her school could continue to foster negative behaviors and this prompted me to speak with the school administrator. Because of my background in nursing and experience working with adolescent patients in a psychiatric hospital setting, I felt I was able to offer some assistance. With a positive attitude, I tried to be part of the solution, not just another parent calling to register a complaint. I discovered later at a school board meeting that there were other parents who shared my concerns. Two other parents, Sherrie Owens and Rosanna Lee, also came forward at a Principal's Coffee Hour offered during that same time period. We

quickly became a team that was able to organize other concerned parents. We combined our talents, put our thoughts on paper, and with the support of the school and district administration were able to put those ideas into action. It was this journey that eventually led to my involvement with helping to develop character education in our schools. The following are some suggestions that could make a difference in your child's life, as well as the lives of other students and their families, faculty, administration, and also the community.

1. *Agree on your vision.* We wanted to help make our school safe where students could thrive.
2. *Develop a Mission Statement.* We wanted to strengthen the partnership between the school and the home to effect a positive school environment.
3. *Choose key issues or goals.* We created three committees: Safety (increased adult presence on campus), Communication (utilized a monthly newsletter to provide information to parents related to PEACE), and Parent Education (supported parent meetings and forums which offered information related to raising adolescents).

4. *Contact the counseling department and offer assistance.* We co-sponsored a fashion show involving students and teachers that addressed student dress code guidelines.
5. *Network with other groups and organizations.* We became an ad hoc group of the PFA (Parent Faculty Association), worked closely with the Amador Adult Ed Program (Provides nationally known speakers and experts regarding parenting and character development), Parent Connection (High School Parent Group), the Safe School Committee (Disaster Preparedness Group), and eventually the Pleasanton Unified School District's Strategy #6 Committee which is currently working on infusing character education throughout the curriculum at all grade levels.

■ *Joy Ellebrecht is a registered nurse as well as a parent volunteer for the Pleasanton School District in Pleasanton, CA. She is co-founder of PEACE.*



HUMILITY quotes

I claim to be no more than an average man with below-average capabilities. I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have if he or she would put forth the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith.

— Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

The important thing is to learn a lesson every time you lose.

— John McEnroe, Tennis Pro

The three hardest tasks in the world are neither physical feats nor intellectual achievements, but moral acts:

*To return love for hate,
To include the excluded, and
To say, "I was wrong."*

— Sydney J. Harris (1917-1986)

Don't be afraid of taking risks or being criticized. If you don't want to be criticized, don't say any-

thing, don't do anything, and don't be anything. Don't be afraid to fail.

— Marian Wright Edelman

Humility, that low, sweet root, from which all heavenly virtues shoot.

— Thomas More

And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin is pride that apes humility.

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge,
The Devil's Thoughts

Humility is strange thing. The minute you think you've got it, you've lost it.

— E.D. Hulse

Real excellence and humility are not incompatible one with the other, on the contrary, they are twin sisters.

— Jean Baptiste Lacordaire

BOOKS that bring HUMILITY to life

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott
Velveteen Rabbit, Margery Williams
The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein
Tuck Everlasting, Natalie Babbitt
The Gift of the Magi, O. Henry
The Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling
The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett
The Story of Jonah, Alison Reed
The Crane Wife, Sumiko Yagawa
Sarah, Plain and Tall, Patricia MacLachlan

MOVIE moments: HUMILITY

Pride and Prejudice

Perfect for older students, *Pride and Prejudice*, describes the unlikely courtship of Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy. Their relationship begins with mutual contempt, but moves

forward as they mature and learn that their first impressions, based on pride, prejudice, and illusions, were incorrect.

Great Expectations

Based on the novel by Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, is about the trials and tribulations of an orphaned boy named Pip who discovers in the end what it means to be a true gentleman.

Quiz Show (1994)

Starring Ralph Fiennes and directed by Robert Redford, *Quiz Show* demonstrates the corrupting power of success and celebrity. Charles Van Doren, the main character and star genius of the quiz show, must learn the importance of honesty, integrity, and humility the hard way.

Regarding Henry (1991)

Regarding Henry is the story of a high-powered, highly successful, however cold-hearted lawyer who must begin his life all over again from the very beginning after he is shot during a hold-up. Not only must he learn to walk and talk again, he must also relearn the value of love, friendship, honor, and humility.

Upcoming EVENTS in CHARACTER EDUCATION

March 18, 8:00-9:30 AM:

ASCD Character Education Network Meeting
Sheraton Boston, Beacon B
56th Annual ASCD Annual Conference and Exhibit Show, Boston, MA

March 17-19, 2001

Telephone 800.933.ASCD
Website www.ascd.org

March 20, April 3, and May 8

C.A.R.E. (Character, Assets, and Resiliency Education) Learning Community
Contact: Connecticut Assets Network
Telephone 860.571.8463
Website www.ctassets.org (CAN website)

March 20 and 21

Second Annual Capital District Conference on Character Education
Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, NY
Contact Mel Horowitz
Telephone 518.629.7180

July 12-14

7th Annual Character Education Conference
Hyatt Regency Union Station, St. Louis, MO
Contact: Jerry Corely
Telephone 800.835.8282, ext. 126
or 314.692.9726
Email jerry@info.csd.org

October 18-20

Character Education Partnership
8th National Forum, "Character Education:
The Other Side of the Report Card"
Denver, CO
Contact CEP
Telephone 202.296.7743 or 800.988.8081
Website www.character.org

MEMBERSHIP Form

Please use this form to initiate, renew, or update your membership.

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CAEC
621 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215

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Occupation, Title, or Position

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Friend of the CAEC (\$50): Quarterly newsletter, occasional mailings.

- New membership
- Renewal

ASCD Character Education Network (\$20): Quarterly newsletter, occasional mailings.

- New membership
- Renewal

Additional contributions \$ _____

Please make checks payable to CAEC.

Note: \$40 of each Friend of the CAEC membership is tax-deductible. We are a non-profit organization that relies on grants and the generosity of its members. Any additional tax-deductible contribution you make to the CAEC is both needed and greatly appreciated.

To our **READERS**

We want to hear from you!

The strength of this newsletter depends on the active contribution of its readers. Our readers need to hear what's happening in your school or community. (That's what our "From the Trenches" section is all about.)

We welcome submissions of any kind: letters, articles, anecdotes. What has worked in your classroom, home, or school? What has inspired your dedication to character education? We also encourage recommendations for our Selected Bibliography and Character Quotes.

The Summer issue will spotlight Perseverance. The deadline for our Summer issue is May 30. Please address all such correspondence to:

Newsletter Managing Editor
Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character
621 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

Visit our website!
<http://www.bu.edu/education/caec>

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NOTES



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