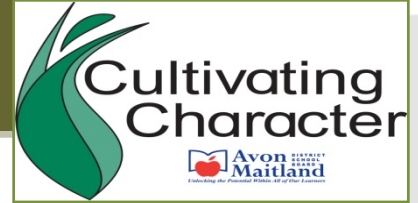


Cultivating Character: Seeds For Thought

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Empathy: Understanding how someone else feels

Me to We Day 2010

Could You?

The following questions are listed on the Free the Children website's home page: Could you live on two dollars a day? Could you go to school if it meant your family couldn't eat? Could you walk for hours every day for a couple litres of water? Could you drink that same water if it made you ill?

On September 30, 36 schools from our district will attend the Me to We Day Event at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto. Free the Children began when one child learned of a story he could not forget. "Battled Child Labour, Boy, 12, Murdered." "No one knew that this short, but powerful headline would catch the eye of 12-year-old Craig Kielburger one April morning in 1995. More so, no one knew that it would spark an entire social movement." Find out more about the history of the organization at: <http://www.freethechildren.com> Craig Kielburger can be followed on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as well.

The motto of the Free the Children organization is "Children helping children through education. According to the organization, "Free the Children's We Schools in Action program inspires a generation to care about social justice and provides the practical tools needed to turn that inspiration into action. Launched by the energy of We Day, the We Schools program puts students at the forefront of active global citizenship by educating them on social issues and action planning, developing leadership skills, and engaging them in world-changing action". On We Day, 360 students and staff will be inspired to reach the goals described above.

Watch the newsletter next month for updates on this event from the perspective of some of our students.

The Wolf: Teaching Humility

Part of understanding how someone else feels is knowing that each of us makes mistakes and that we learn from them.



The wolf represents humility because of its giving nature and devotion to protecting and working for the good of the Wolf family. The wolf places the welfare of the pack above his own. Wolves are generous and loving parents, setting an example of what our communities and family systems should be.

You know, there's a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit -- the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes; to see the world through the eyes of those who are different from us -- the child who's hungry, the steelworker who's been laid-off, the family who lost the entire life they built together when the storm came to town. When you think like this -- when you choose to broaden your ambit of concern and empathize with the plight of others, whether they are close friends or distant strangers -- it becomes harder not to act; harder not to help.

Barack Obama

United Way Red and White Day is Friday, October 8

Quotes About Empathy

How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.

George Washington Carver

Empathy takes time, and efficiency is for things, not people.

Stephen Covey

If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.

Henry Ford

Literacy Link: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson

According to Greg Mortenson's biography available at: <http://www.gregmortenson.com/biography/>, Mr. Mortenson is the co-founder of nonprofit Central Asia Institute www.ikat.org, founder of Pennies For Peace www.penniesforpeace.org, co-author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Three Cups of Tea* www.threecupsoftea.com, and author of bestseller *Stones into Schools* www.stonesintoschools.com.

In 2009, Mortenson received Pakistan's highest civil award, Sitara-e-Pakistan ("Star of Pakistan") for his dedicated and humanitarian effort to promote education and literacy in rural areas for fifteen years.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School At a Time describes Greg's journey from mountain climbing to building schools. The following review excerpt is from <http://www.goodreads.com>:

One day in 1993, high up in the world's most inhospitable mountains, Greg Mortenson wandered lost and alone, broken in body and spirit, after a failed attempt to climb K2, the world's deadliest peak. When the people of an impoverished village in Pakistan's Karakoram Himalaya took him in and nursed him back to health, Mortenson made an impulsive promise: He would return one day and build them a school. Although he was a homeless "climbing bum" living out of his aging Buick in Berkeley, California, Mortenson sold what few possessions he had to launch one of the most remarkable humanitarian campaigns of our time.

Three Cups of Tea traces Mortenson's decade-long odyssey to build schools, especially for girls, throughout the region that gave birth to the Taliban and sanctuary to Al Qaeda.

Parenting Tips

The blog available at this link contains ideas about teaching empathy from a number of different perspectives:

<http://teachempathy.com/>

Teach empathy through encouragement and modeling empathetic behavior yourself. This article by Christine Langlois in *Canadian Living* "Teaching Empathy and Tolerance: Helping Your Children Embrace and Respect Others" contains some parenting tips about teaching empathy:

http://www.canadianliving.com/family/parenting/teaching_empathy_and_tolerance.php

Read younger children story books about friendship. Titles such as *One* by Kathryn Otoshi, and *Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully* by Audrey Penn focus on this theme, which gives you an opportunity to talk to your child about empathy.

The story of Greg Mortenson can be accessed through the original book, through the Young Adult version of the book, and through the children's picture book of the story, *Listen to the Wind* co-authored by Greg Mortenson and Susan L. Roth.

If you are interested, more information is available at the following website:

<http://www.threecupsoftea.com/>



Character Spotlight: Brookside Public School

Brookside Pride!

At our school, we definitely have a variety of programs, events and curriculum connections to promote positive character attributes. Our newest initiatives are the “Who is Nobody?” and “Who is Green?” programs. These initiatives are a great way for our students and our community to learn respect for others and for the environment. We have kits that contain faceless, plain dolls that come with a scrapbook. Each person can change the “Nobodys” into “Somebodys” by doing tasks that exhibit respect for others or green tasks. The Nobody from “Who is Nobody?” will start out in the Grade 2/3 classroom and the green Nobody will be shared with each class working on a specific green task every month throughout the school year. Then the class/student records the tasks in the scrapbook and decides what artifacts to attach to the Nobodys to make them Somebodys. Students learn that *every* person can make a difference in others’ lives and can help preserve our environment.

Every little effort to help adds up! We hope to get some media coverage of our efforts and we will put updates on our school website.

Watch for us!

Written by Ocean Poels
Grade 8 Student

Wanted: Your Great Ideas!

We would like to hear more great ideas from your students. If they have ideas to share about how they are making a difference in their schools, communities, and the world, please forward them to Stacy Somerville via First Class: stacsome@fc.amdsb.ca Ideas will be shared in newsletters and on the Seeds For Thought wiki so that resources are easily accessible to everyone in the board.



Environmental Links

Greenspace Wiki

Avon Maitland District School Board’s environmental wiki is available at: <http://greenspaceamdsb.pbworks.com>
Many excellent resources are available on this wiki.

Project Flow Funding Opportunity

Through Project Flow, Canadian teachers have the opportunity to apply for funding to support water action projects in their classrooms. See the link available at: <http://r4r.ca/en/project-flow>
Ideas and resources are also available at this link.