



AROUND THE CIRCLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CIRCLE OF GRANDPARENTS -
A PROGRAM OF PARTNERS FOR CITIZENSHIP AND CHARACTER
A JOURNEY OF CHARACTER - 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Volume 4 Issue 4 Debra R. Stephen, Coordinator (614-436-4799) November, 2010

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Character
Trait for
December

Mark Your Calendar

Regular Monthly Meeting

Thursday, December 2
Thompson Room
Griswold Senior Center

Member **Mary Winter** will
share what she does in
her classrooms.

No School

December 20 – 31

New Year's Potluck

Thursday, January 6
12:30 – 2:00 p.m.



At the October meeting teacher **Amelia Shearer** shared teaching tips on how to hold your students attention.

*"Children are the living messages we send
to a time we will not see."*

John W. Whitehead, Founder, Rutherford Institute

COMPASSION SUPPLIMENTS AVAILABLE FOR HANDBOOKS

Please print the worksheets found at the end of this newsletter for your handbook. These materials were purchased with monies from the **Charlotte I. Spohn** memorial fund. *Permission has been granted by the publisher for us to use them in our handbooks and classrooms.* The worksheets are designed for Grades 2-3 and Grades 4-5. The upper right hand corner of each sheet denotes the suggested grade level.

COG IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



2,225 Students
89 Classrooms
67 Grandparents
11 Schools
1 Intergenerational
Circle of Character



FROM DEBRA'S DESK



Dear "Grandparents",

When we decided to use the theme "A Journey of Character" for this historic 10th year anniversary I had no idea that it would be taken so literally. This year has seen the expansion of programs patterned after ours in Grove City and most recently a Catholic school in Casper, Wyoming. Our website is reaching people far and wide and our successful journey is paving roads for others to travel.

A few weeks ago, our journey took me to the Old Worthington Library where I took part in their Read to Baby Festival for the third time. I enjoyed talking to anyone who would listen about our incredible program. The highlight of my day was hearing from a mother about **Grandparent Carol Bogaards'** work in her daughter's class. The mother was *very* impressed with **Carol's** lessons. It was obvious that her daughter had shared every detail of **Carol's** visits. Thanks to **Carol**, and all the other Grandparents, who make our program so look good!

Thanks to **Georgia Reinbold's** diligence, **responsibility**, and **commitment** (not to mention patience) I found the road leading me to Bruegger's for our first fundraiser. There I enjoyed lunching with about a dozen **Grandparents**. What a fantastic and fun way to raise dough! We made \$77.42 by just eating. That's my kind of fundraiser!

I next found the road leading me to the Worthington Education Center where our Charter Members were photographed and interviewed by the State for the induction ceremony this spring. After the paparazzi left, the Charter Members were honored by the Worthington School Board for their accomplishments (see Page 3). Congratulations to **Diane DeMuth**, **Elizabeth Hague**, **Kathy Shaffer**, **Braxton Tewart**, **Anthony Petrozzi** (deceased) and **James Timko** (deceased). The road you paved has served, and continues to serve, us well.

Continued...

Continued...

Last week the road led me to observe **Dorie Eisenman** performing her magic in the Kindergarten class of **Karen Stefanacci** at **Brookside**. Never before have I seen a class spontaneously break into applause at the climax of a book. In twelve hours time, I had heard applause twice . . . once from a grateful school community for our charter members and then from our youngest students when a little mouse saw the value of **self-discipline** during a baseball game for which he had practiced long and hard. It was a moment I'll never forget.

A staff member of the Worthington Administration recently complimented me on my work with the **Circle**. My response was that the secret to my success is found in surrounding myself with people who make me look good. Thanks to everyone for making this journey so enjoyable. Love, **Debra**



A JOURNEY OF CHARACTER 10th Year Anniversary End of the Year Celebration Committee News

There is BIG news from the Committee, which met November 18th. . . Thanks to the efforts of **Dorie Eisenman**, we will be holding the event at the **Worthington Presbyterian Church** (right next door to the **Griswold Center**).

The date of the Celebration has been moved to **Thursday, May 5!**

The Committee also thanks **Georgia Reinbold** for her efforts in organizing the Bruegger's Bagel fundraiser which raised \$77.42.

The next committee meeting will be January 20, 2011.

CHARTER MEMBERS RECEIVE ROYAL TREATMENT!

On Monday, November 22, 2010 charter members **Diane DeMuth**, **Elizabeth Hague**, **Anthony Petrozzi** (deceased), **Kathy Shaffer**, **Braxton Tewart**, and **James Timko** (deceased) were honored by the **Worthington School Board**. Before the Board meeting, they were photographed and interviewed by the Communication Department of the State of Ohio's Department of Aging in preparation for the induction ceremony this spring. They are wonderful ambassadors for our program and PCC! Enjoy these pictures from their night!





GOT CHARACTER (TREE)?

Wow! I *have* to do a better job of hiding the tree. Within minutes of sending out the newsletter I heard from **Mary Winter**. I also heard from **Judy Rammel** and **Carolyn Taneja**. They found the tree on the left page of the notebook on my desk on page 2.

Have fun finding this one!



-Debra

DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to **Judy Rammel**, whose mother passed away. **Judy's** aunt passed away a short week later. **Judy** has two grandchildren at **Brookside** and will be joining us next year.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES



It's been four weeks since I've received any stories from your classrooms to add to our collection. Come on folks, don't let me down! Please send me any endearing and cute stories from your classrooms! (**John and Roy**, that means you!)

- Debra

ROSTER UPDATE

Please update your roster with the following change: **Braxton Tewart's** phone numbers is 614-459-8498 (home)



The Lorax stopped by to hear about the **PCC Circle of Grandparents** at the November 14 Read to Baby Festival at the Old Worthington Library.



Gay Blossom (our Grandparent from Toledo) and **Paula Wilt** reconnected over lunch at Bruegger's on November 22nd. Both worked with the 6th grade at **Bluffsview** last year.



NEW YEAR'S POTLUCK

JANUARY 6, 2011

12:30—2 P.M.

ALL GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR GUESTS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US IN THE TOWN HALL OF THE GRISWOLD CENTER FOR A HOLIDAY POTLUCK! PLAN TO BRING AN EXTRA LARGE DISH AS WE WILL BE HOSTING THE PCC CHARACTERS IN ACTION TROUPE. TABLE SETTINGS, MEAT AND BEVERAGES

WILL BE PROVIDED. SUGGESTED DISHES ARE:

A-G SALADS

H-O VEGETABLES

P-W DESSERTS

**MEETING REPORT****November 4, 2010****Conference Room of the Worthington Education Center****1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.**

In attendance: **Beth Arnold, Audrey Clumm, Elizabeth Collins, Dorie Eisenman, Elizabeth Hague, Bill Mrukowski, Linda Mrukowski, Abramo Ottolenghi, Dorothy Pridham, Heinz Putz, Wallie Putz, Amelia Shearer, Debra Stephen, Braxton Tewart, Joan Van De Weghe, Helga Waldrop, Roy Wielonski, Mary Winter, Marilyn Winters, Marilyn Wollett and Bonnie Worden**

Debra Stephen began the meeting at 1 o'clock. **Helga Waldrop** was thanked for bringing the snacks. Posters, school calendars, coloring books, and flyers for the Read to Baby Festival were available for Grandparents. A sign-up was available for Grandparents who would like **Debra** to take pictures of them in their classroom for the end of the year slide show. Members were encouraged to share cute, heart-warming stories from their classrooms with **Debra** for a collection that she is putting together for the end of the year.

Charter Members were recognized and congratulated for being accepted into the Ohio Senior Citizen Hall of Fame.

Debra reported that the Partners for Citizenship and Character (PCC) was having its membership drive and encouraged members to contribute.

Elizabeth Hague reported that the 10th year anniversary celebration date was changed to May 5. An application has been submitted to the Worthington United Methodist Church and we were awaiting approval. **Dorie Eisenman** said she would check with the Worthington Presbyterian Church after the meeting to see if it was available. *(See updated information on Page 2.)*

Dorie Eisenman told the Grandparents about a marvelous exhibit by Mark's sister, Ellen, at the McConnell Arts Center from October 28 through January 3.

Teacher and friend of the **Circle, Amelia Shearer** was introduced. **Amelia** began by asking Grandparents to think about some of the things that they were interested in when they were younger. Depending on your age, you would have experienced a different culture from a different generation. It is important to know the culture that your students are living in so that you can use it to help them be interested in what you are teaching. As an educator, your goal is to get them interested so that they learn what you are trying to teach.

Younger children learn most of their pop culture inside the classroom. Around the 4th grade level, they begin to be influenced by culture outside their classroom. Music, TV, internet, and video games make up the influences of today's youth.

Why should you care about pop culture, which occurs outside the classroom, as an educator? **Amelia** said, "It is important because you have a product that you want to give the kids. You know that what you are presenting to them is something that is good for them and will help them lead a better life. In your class there are kids who are interested and engaged, but there are also kids who are sitting back and uninterested because they don't think what you are presenting is of any interest to them. To help break down that wall with the uninterested kids you have to reach them with things that they are interested in."

Amelia added that using students' interests and their culture in the classroom is a way of speaking in terms that they already understand. Character traits are abstract. Abstract ideas are difficult for kids to understand until



around the middle school age and for some it's later than that. To teach character you need tangible illustrations. Using their interests helps put a face to something that is unclear in their mind. She used as an illustration that if you were teaching **commitment**, you could use Superman as an example of someone who is committed to helping people in need. When people need help, it doesn't matter what he is doing, he answers that call because he is committed.

One of the benefits of having a Grandparent in the classroom is using examples from your life to help children understand the concept. That needs to be balanced with things that are shared knowledge among the students. *Pop culture is not the end goal; it is a vehicle to help students engage in more substantive issues.*

There are several ways to discover the interests of your students:

1. Ask the teacher to make a list for you. Before going into your classroom look over the list and see if any of their interests are good illustrations of the character trait that you are teaching.
2. Survey them. **Amelia** distributed copies of a survey she used with her students.
3. Ask them. For example, you could tell your class that you are going to talk about Respect today and then ask them, "Can you think of any characters that are respectful – or disrespectful?"
4. Ask another Grandparent. Ask a grandparent that has actual grandchildren the age of the class that you are working with to see what the interests of their grandchildren are.

Examples of popular culture that could be used are:

- Superheroes are popular with young boys (2nd grade and lower) illustrate several of our character traits.
- Sports teams are great to teach things like **diligence, commitment, and self-discipline**. (**Amelia** suggested that instead of vaguely using sports as an illustration of the character trait use a specific team or person and tell a story of that team or person that illustrates the character trait.)
- Disney Princesses are good examples of **compassion, integrity, and tolerance**. Almost every Disney movie has a hero and a villain.
- Villains are good ways to help kids learn the opposite of the character that you are teaching.
- The new version of the Karate Kid with Will Smith's son (for older students) is a great way to teach **respect** and **self-discipline**. Even if you've never seen it, you could say that you've heard the movie is a good example of **self-discipline** and that you've never seen it. Ask the kids to tell you examples of the character trait and they will think through the examples that the boy exhibited and tell you. It helps the kids to apply the character trait to actual lives.
- Dr. Seuss books have great character messages.

Be aware that not all children are exposed to the same things and it will help if you describe it so that all the kids know what you are talking about.

Amelia ended by suggesting that Grandparent talk about bullying and also address cyber-bullying. She said that all children know that it's wrong to shove someone on the playground or throw things at someone. But it gets fuzzier when they call them a name by texting or emailing their friends about how horrible someone is. They don't realize that it is the same thing.

Members broke into two groups, K-3 and 4-6, and brainstormed about ideas that could be used in classrooms.

Debra announced that **Georgia Reinhold** organized a fundraiser for the **Circle** with Bruegger's Bagels. 15% of all purchases, with the flyer, on Monday, November 22 from 8 a.m. through 6 p.m. would benefit the **Circle**. **Debra** would be distributing the flyers within the week.

The meeting ended at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Debra R. Stephen*