

State Operated Programs of Virginia

# Sharpening Our Perspective

Brought to you by: The Cultivating Character Committee

**Kindness, Caring, Love, and Compassion**

**February 2017**

## **Words of Wisdom**

*Dictionary.com* defines **compassion** as “a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” As SOP teachers and staff, we often have **compassion** for the students and residents in our care. But does this **compassion** bring us satisfaction or fatigue? Have you even heard those terms used before? According to [ProQOL.org](http://ProQOL.org), **compassion satisfaction** is the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work, and **compassion fatigue** is the negative aspect of helping those who experience traumatic stress and suffering.

Not sure where you are on this spectrum? As Amy Cunningham says in her motivational *Ted Talk* entitled [“Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of Vicarious Trauma”](#), I highly encourage you to “take 10” for yourself and complete the [Professional Quality of Life Scale \(ProQOL\)](#) survey to find out! Then think about your results and what they tell you about yourself. If you are feeling **compassion satisfaction**, then keep up the good work! However, if you are feeling **compassion fatigue**, then take the time to take care of yourself. We cannot show **kindness, caring, love, and compassion** to others if we cannot show them to ourselves first.

- Daniel Woodard

**The Vision Statement of the Cultivating Character Committee:**

*Empowering SOP educators to cultivate social emotional intelligence and excellence of character.*

**In This Issue:**

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- ◆ YA Books of the Month

## **Ready Resources**

Click on the links below for:

[Polk County, FL Public Schools' Keys to Character Newsletter: Compassion](#)

[Edutopia's Article: Creating More Compassionate Classrooms](#)

[Random Acts of Kindness Foundation's Website](#)

[Kindness Quotes](#)

[Edutopia's Article: Why Teaching Kindness in Schools Is Essential to Reduce Bullying](#)

### Videos

[Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of Vicarious Trauma](#)

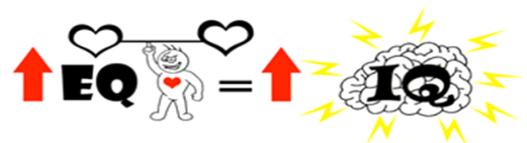
[Said About Love: Inspirational Video](#)

[Ted Talk: Kindness by Orly Wahba](#)

“Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness.”

**- Lucius Annaeus Seneca**

**Celebrate [National Acts of Kindness Week](#) February 12th-18th!**



## Spotlight On: Black History Month

"The celebration of **Black History Month** is a great opportunity to help students develop **compassion**, an appreciation of our nation's history, and writing and research skills" (*Keys to Character*, 2012). What a great way to tie in both content and Character Education throughout the month of February. Here are a few activities and suggested readings taken from Polk County, Florida's *Key to Character Newsletter*. A link to this excellent resource is also listed under the **Ready Resources** section on the front page.

### Activities:

Explain to students that history happened each day of the year, not just one month during the year. Using the following web sites ([Black History Online](#) and [This Day In Black History](#)) have the students create a daily "Today in Black History" calendar of events. A calendar template can be printed and a different month can be given to each student. Have students write one event for each day, and hang the finished product in your classroom.

[Watch the famous video](#) and study and discuss the [text of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech](#). Allow students to write a few sentences or paragraph about their own dreams for the future, and then make a poster with images that show their dreams. Display and share the posters.

### Suggested Readings Featuring Compassion:

Shelf Medearis, Angela. [Princess of the Press: The Story of Ida B. Wells-Barnett](#). Dutton Juvenile. 1997.

When Ida B. Wells boarded a train on May 4, 1884, she paid full fare but was told she had to sit in the dirty, crowded smoking section because she was black. Ida refused and was thrown off the train. Ida took the railroad to court, and in doing so, changed the course of her life by embarking on a lifelong crusade as a civil rights activist.

Moses, Sheila P. and Bonnie Christensen. [I, Dred Scott: A Fictional Slave Narrative Based on the Life and Legal Precedent of Dred Scott](#). McElderry Books. 2005.

Dred Scott was born into slavery in the late 1700s. Compared to most slaves, Scott was treated fairly well by his first owner, growing up with his owner's children and forming friendships that proved in later years to be very important. When Scott was an adult, his owner changed several times. Later, he and his wife took a bold and dangerous step when they sued for their freedom. Their legal battle lasted for 11 years. They were aided by local people in their community and the grown children Scott had been raised with. Shortly before Scott died, he and his wife finally became free.

"Black History Month helps us focus not only on the history and struggles of African-Americans in this country, but also challenges us to develop **compassion** as we recognize and reflect upon the dangers of prejudice, bigotry and racism in a broader perspective...remind children to always put themselves in the other person's shoes. Then reinforce your teaching by being an example worth imitating" (*Keys to Character*, 2012).

- Kristin Sheetz



Ideas for our March newsletter? Have a resource or teaching tip to share? Is your center doing something with character education you want the rest of the state to know about? Please submit them to [Kristin.Sheetz@lcps.org](mailto:Kristin.Sheetz@lcps.org).

### YA Books of the Month

These Young Adult novels feature:  
Kindness, Caring, Love, and Compassion

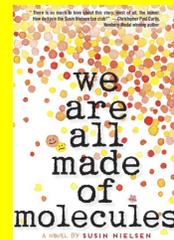


*Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli  
[Click for Summary and Review](#)



*How to Save a Life* by Sara Zarr

[Click for Summary and Review](#)



*We Are All Made of Molecules* by Susin Nielsen

[Click for Summary and Review](#)

*Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* by Chris Crutcher

[Click for Summary and Review](#)

