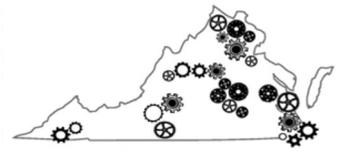




Sharpening Our Perspective

Brought to you by: The Cultivating Character Committee



State Operated Programs of Virginia

Social Intelligence, Awareness, Fairness, Empathy, and Forgiveness

June/July 2016

Words of Wisdom

To quote author James Thurber, “Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness.” As we bring another school year to a close here in SOP, it’s a good time to demonstrate awareness by reflecting on our practices. First of all, I would like to thank all of you for taking the time to read our new newsletter! I’d also like to thank all of the Cultivating Character Liaisons in our centers for their dedication to spreading the monthly messages that help us cultivate character in the young people who we reach throughout the state of Virginia. To those of you moving on from SOP, thank you for your service. To those of you returning to serve the SEL and character needs of our centers, we are already looking forward to the year to come.

Last, but certainly not least, a well-deserved thank you to our director, Merilee Fox, for her endless “enlightened leadership.” Philosopher Deepak Chopra defines “enlightened leadership” as “spiritual if we understand spirituality not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focused attention.” Anyone who has met Merilee knows that she exhibits all of the above, and then some.

So let us be aware, fair, and intelligent in our reflections as we take time, however short it may be, to relax and rejuvenate. Let us forgive ourselves for any shortcomings we may have exhibited this school year; and let us return to our programs with a spirit of renewed hope and optimism.

- Daniel Woodard

Ready Resources

Click on the links below for:

- [Lesson Plan for Developing Empathy in High School Students](#)
- [Lesson Plan for Developing Empathy in Middle School Students](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance](#)
- [Teaching Social Awareness](#)
- [Lesson Plans for Teaching Fairness and Social Justice](#)
- [Band-Aid Lesson: Fair is Not Equal](#)
- [The Forgiveness Project](#)

Videos

- [Five Minute Film Festival: Videos on Kindness, Empathy, and Connection](#)
- [Emotional Intelligence Explained](#)
- [The Power of Forgiveness](#)

The Vision Statement of the Cultivating Character Committee:

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

In this issue:

- ◆ Words of Wisdom
- ◆ Ready Resources
- ◆ Center Spotlight
- ◆ YA Summer Reads

“Empathy and social skills are social intelligence, the interpersonal part of emotional intelligence. That’s why they look alike.”

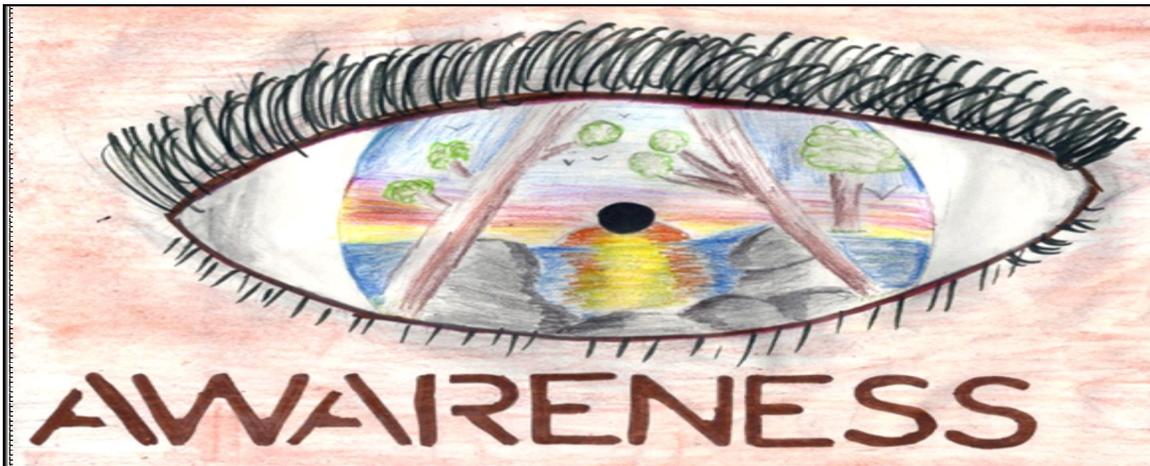
- Daniel Goleman



Center Spotlight

It was raining praise and appreciation at the Loudoun County JDC throughout the months of April and May. The school program launched a month-long endeavor to celebrate and recognize the efforts of our entire JDC community, culminating in a final activity to commemorate both Teacher Appreciation Week and Correctional Officer Appreciation Week. Members of the JDC Staff, the JDC School Program, and residents of the JDC completed flower petals all month long, thanking someone for an act of kindness or a display of positive character. The petals were hung up in our dining hall every few days, culminating in a large garden of positivity on display. According to LCJDC School Program Dean, Peggy Gordon, "We reached out to the rest of the community here in the detention center to give people an opportunity to see a character trait in action. It was a chance for everyone to show their kindness and appreciation for one another regardless of their role in the building." The community-building activity was appreciated by staff and residents alike. When asked about the mural in the dining hall, JDC Counselor Edwards shared his thoughts: "I can honestly say it was a morale builder. It made me feel good, and I took my petal home with me and put it in my drawer." The positivity continued a few weeks later as members of the JDC School Program, along with JDC Floor Staff and Supervisors from two shifts, took a few hours out of their days to participate in joint staff development. The PD began with a personality style activity in which everyone gravitated towards certain traits with which they identified. Next, staff members took a *Professional Quality of Life* (PROQOL) Inventory. Both activities led to good discussion and seeing each other in a different light. As JDC P.E. Teacher, R.J. Fillipovich, shared: "It was an opportunity to build upon relationships and to further strengthen our communication with floor staff." The day ended with an ice cream social, Minute to Win It games, and a collaborative drum circle led by Music Therapist Cheryl Mayton. To sum it up, JDC Counselor Carter exclaimed, "It was awesome, and I had a lot of fun!"

- Kristin Sheetz

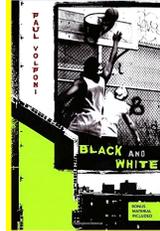


Ideas for our August newsletter? Have a resource or teaching tip to share? Is your center doing something with character education you want the rest of the state to know about? Please submit them to Kristin.Sheetz@lcps.org.

YA Summer Reads

These Young Adult novels feature:

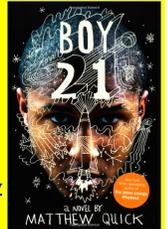
Social Intelligence,
Awareness,
Fairness, Empathy,
and
Forgiveness



**Black and
White**
by
Paul Volponi

[Click for Summary
and Review](#)

Boy 21
by
**Matthew
Quick**



[Click for Summary
and Review](#)



**Thirteen
Reasons
Why**
by
Jay Asher

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and Review](#)

**Touching
Spirit Bear**
by
**Ben
Mikaelsen**



[Click for Summary
and Review](#)