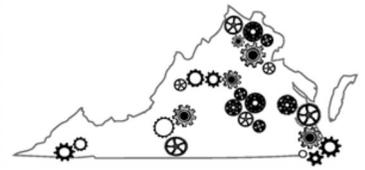




Sharpening Our Perspective

Brought to you by: The Cultivating Character Committee



State Operated Programs of Virginia

Open-mindedness, Tolerance, and Acceptance

October 2016

Words of Wisdom

What can be said of the latent mind: one that refuses to receive information without judgement? And how does the identity of a few clash with the general beliefs of another? Think over the last ten months as a nation—gun violence, racial tensions, or even LGBTQ rights may surface in thought. As the news broke over these fragile issues, instinctively you developed an opinion on the matter; right or wrong, you sided with one group over another. I, too, am guilty of picking sides: quick to render an opinion while trying to debate the latest news. And like millions of Americans whose minds have been molded by a world of influences, occasionally I might slap on a label of disapproval for sensitive topics just to be heard. Is that fair? Of course not! So, how does open-mindedness impact this discussion? Well, let us first understand that personal opinions only matter when requested or when used constructively to influence positivity. As we increasingly work to gain tolerance and acceptance from the residents of SOP, perhaps we should ask, “Are we tolerant and accepting of them?” Occasionally, we greet residents with bias and intolerance. It pains us to strategize and to develop creative opportunities for efficacy; so, instead, we turn on the countdown, “only 29 more days until he leaves.” This wave of thinking is definitely contagious, and soon we hear colleagues coughing up similar statements. Is there a remedy to this condition? Yes. The remedy is actually located within oneself, and through personal reassurance we can revoke predispositions that often plague our character. And so, open-mindedness is possibly one of the most beautiful traits for a few reasons:

1. we do not have to change our view on topics; we just have to remain open to listen;
2. as we listen, we can practice receiving information with tolerance and without judgement;
3. we can demonstrate a willingness to try new things and to be open to facing our fears.

As we journey ahead, let us achieve a quality of life not realized before and commit to an open, non-biased, tolerant attitude in the midst of our residents and others served.

-Daniel Woodard

Ready Resources

Click on the links below for:

[Quotes About Open-Mindedness](#)

[NCSS Article “Four Strategies for Teaching Open-Mindedness”](#)

[Education World’s Teaching Tolerance Lesson Plans](#)

[Tolerance.org](#)

[Quotes About Acceptance](#)

Videos

[Ted Talk - Lisa Bu: “How books can open your mind”](#)

[Zak Ebrahim’s TED Talk: A powerful story of peace and tolerance](#)

[IF WE COULD SEE INSIDE OTHERS’ HEARTS: LIFE, in 4 min](#)

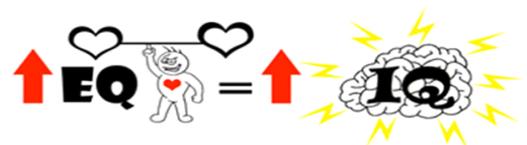
The Vision Statement of the Cultivating Character Committee:

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

- In This Issue:**
- ◆ Words of Wisdom
 - ◆ Ready Resources
 - ◆ Center Spotlight
 - ◆ YA Books of the Month

“A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.”

- Frank Zappa



Center Spotlight: A Cross-Curricular Approach to Character Day

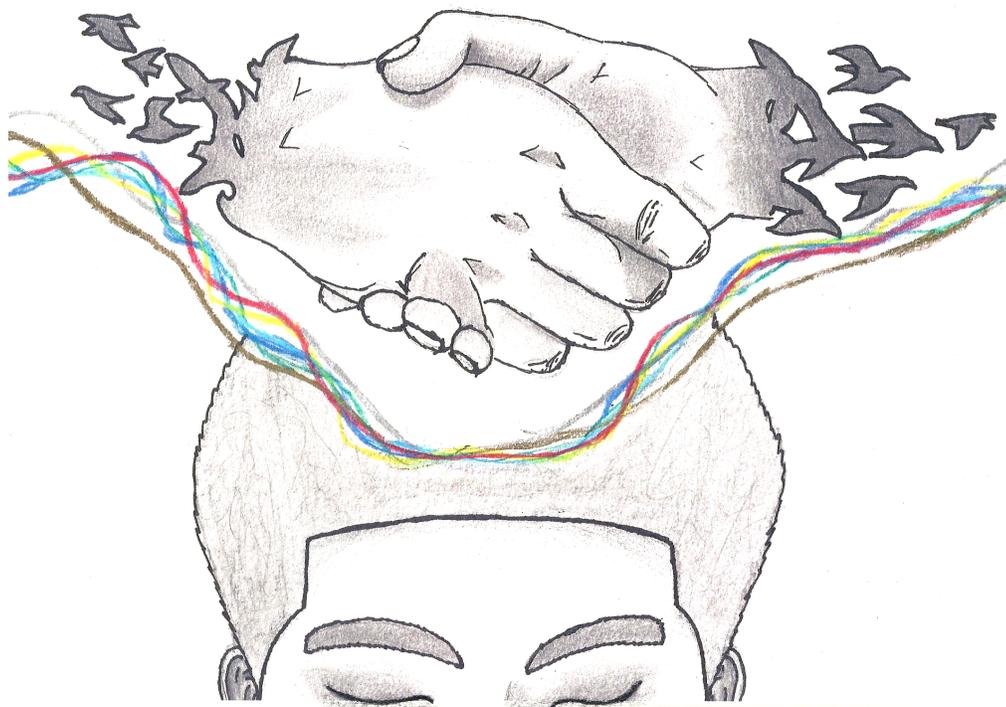
September 22, 2016 marked the third anniversary of Let It Ripple Film Studio's **Character Day**. In 2014, a group of filmmakers embarked upon a journey to get people talking about character and character development. That year, roughly 1,500 groups among 32 different countries participated. On **Character Day's** recent 3rd anniversary, that original number grew 60 times to 90,000 participants in 124 countries and all 50 United States. One of those participants was the Loudoun County JDC.

On September 21st (the day before), the students watched the short and engaging [Character Day 2016 trailer](#) during **reading** class and were intrigued. On **Character Day** itself, the students began the day by reading a *Newsela* article entitled "[Unique Juvenile Court Teacher Minority Boys to Be Men](#)" in **health** class. The article included a section describing the character education that the youth learned while in the program. Next, they transitioned to **English** class where they watched the short film "[The Adaptable Mind](#)" and had a group discussion focusing on the trait of empathy. **Math** class followed English, and the skill of creating pie graphs was reviewed in preparation for an activity to come later in the day. Next came **science** class, in which the students watched "[Science of Character](#)" and completed and discussed the provided [discussion guide questions](#).

After lunch when the students returned to school, we came together as one big group of students, teachers, and counselors who wanted to participate in **Character Day**. We brainstormed who our role models were and what character traits they possessed and then watched "[The Making of a Mensch](#)". We then compared our role models to "mensches" and looked at our own character strengths and weaknesses using the [Periodic Table of Character Strengths](#). We finished the day with playing the [Science of Character Card Game](#) in small groups.

Overall, we were incredibly pleased with how well our first **Character Day** celebration went. The students seemed to really enjoy it, and it was both eye-opening and beneficial to connect with them in small groups on a more personal level. In fact, our event was such a success that our JDC Administration and Staff are planning on using some of its components for their own trainings. I have already signed us up for [Character Day 2017](#), and I highly encourage you to do the same! You should also check out Let It Ripple's [Character \(Every\) Day Resource Hub](#): an EXTENSIVE website of over 5,000 resources searchable by specific character trait.

-Kristin Sheetz



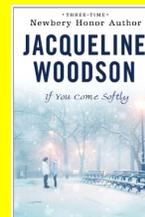
Ideas for our November newsletter? Have a resource or teaching tip to share? Is your center doing something with character education you want the rest of the state to know about? Please submit them to Kristin.Sheetz@lcps.org.

YA Books of the Month

These Young Adult novels feature:

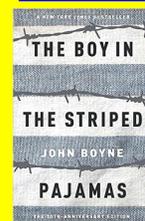
**Open-mindedness,
Tolerance, and Acceptance**

***If You Come Softly* by
Jacqueline Woodson
[Click for Summary and
Review](#)**



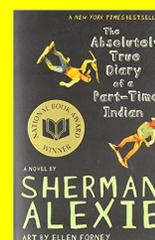
***The Boy in the Striped
Pajamas* by John
Boyne**

**[Click for Summary and
Review](#)**



***The Absolutely True
Diary of a Part-Time
Indian* by Sherman
Alexie**

**[Click for Summary and
Review](#)**



***Dumplin'* by Julie
Murphy**

**[Click for Summary and
Review](#)**

