



ISC Views and Voices

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The Day of the Bobcat

Campus Volunteer, Mark Ogle, was not expecting what happened the day he arrived at the Campus with his Bobcat: there was suddenly a swarm of students on his trailer and climbing all over his machine! Our very agile climbing enthusiast, Michael, was on top of the Bobcat's cage in moments, and Victor was instantly in the driver's seat checking out the controls. Then came the request to drive the Bobcat.

A problem with the machine's battery gave students the opportunity to witness the Bobcat getting a boost from Nicolette's Toyota, and then the students watched as Mark



drove the Bobcat down the ramp.

Students hesitated when asked who wanted to go first, so Nicolette, who had driven the machine before, hopped in for a quick spin. Thereafter, the "I'll go" and the "I'm next" began. Victor was the first to drive the Bobcat, and, like every student after him, he received detailed instructions

from Mark on how to operate the machine. At the end of about two hours, Victor, Yusuke, Bretton, Logan, Lael, Michael, Kennedy, Greg, Nathen and Dylan had gone up and down the street, done many turns, moved the bucket up and down and experienced the fun of upping the throttle for more speed! Not excluded, Connor

rode in the Bobcat with Mark and experimented with picking up and dumping leaves alongside the curb. Finally, Johnny had a turn and impressed even Mark with how quickly he mastered the controls. The whole experience ended with a quick "wheelie" demonstration from Mark and an invitation to Dylan to have a work experience day and help Mark backfill a house.

Most memorable quote: In response to a question from Dylan, Bretton smiled widely and said, "Yeah, I've got Bobcat in me!"**

Nicolette Groeneveld



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What a Difference!

Two years ago – it seems like an eternity and yet, when I think back to where I was in October 2000 and compare it to where I am now, the memories become vivid indeed! Thirty-five fourteen year olds in one room, and there I was having constantly to remind them, “Please, no talking!” Twenty-nine grade eights learning about the government in Brazil (“Why do we have to learn this, Madame?”) and making mobiles because we had to do *something* (“Madame, can we do something *fun*?”) to help them try to remember the information. And on my lunch hours: hallway supervision - playing cat and mouse with students I didn’t know at all who didn’t want to go outside and preferred trying to hide somewhere in the hallways. And parent-teacher interviews: seeing the increasing distance between parents and children because the children “just weren’t measuring up”. And my evenings and weekends: looking at the mounds of marking I had to do and wondering, “Is this worth my time? Either the kids don’t care or the marks stress them to the max... Am I really doing anyone a service?” Then there were the days I was so worn out I just wanted to stay in bed and sleep, but it was easier to go to school myself than to make plans for a substitute. And probably the worst two situations: firstly, when my beloved students would come to me heaving heart-wrenching sobs because they were failing one or more of their subjects and couldn’t understand why on earth they had to learn that “stuff” and why they couldn’t just “get it”; and secondly, seeing some of my most intelligent, creative and spunky students completely turned off and tuned out because they just didn’t care at all about what they were being taught.

And now here I am, in a completely different world! Students actually look forward to school! How many of our stu-

dents will come on a Friday even when they’ve already met their 25-hour requirement?

And there’s no policing and no “rescuing” for me to do: when there’s a conflict and a student comes running to me to intervene, I simply ask, “What are your choices in dealing with this?” Almost always without my help, the student creates his/her own solution and walks away satisfied. As for “policing”, the JC takes care of rule breakers and shows the weight the voices of the students carry. When Tyler makes a comment or offers a suggestion, everyone listens. When Dylan expresses his impatience, the students who are not taking things seriously get the message. And when a rule breaker suddenly gets to the *cause* of an incident rather than just talking about the *symptom*, a transformation occurs.

The interactions in our school are magical as well! One of my favorite things is seeing the younger and older students together! In what school environment, for example, do you see two young girls climbing all over a somewhat intimidating looking 15-year old boy? And where do you see an eight-year old boy having a lengthy conversation with the office manager while waiting for a phone call? I was also so impressed when a parent came in to get information about our school, and Amanda came into the room where we were talking, confidently stuck out her hand, introduced herself and promptly told the parent this is the best school for youth to be!

The debates in Campus Meetings are just as delightful! Every once in a while, Ric plays the devil’s advocate, just to get the students going. They end up arguing their points with determination and are rewarded when their motions are passed.

On the learning front, there’s magic in seeing students absolutely and fully absorbed in what they’re doing – whether

they’re making an X-box out of Model Magic, making a collage, redesigning a person’s image on a make-over computer program, helping another to learn Spanish, creating a roof for the fort, practicing a skateboard maneuver, playing chess, making a puzzle, setting up a stock market portfolio or...! Students here rarely ask why they have to do something – I’ve only heard that question around attendance hours, the JC and certification procedures. The nice difference is that when students ask me, “Why do I have to...”, I have an answer I believe in; and usually, after presenting an explanation, the students understand the reasoning behind the requirement too.

The fact that the standard school time requirements don’t exist at ISC is a wonderful change too. Students can start a project and keep going as long as their interest holds, rather than being ripped from an activity because a bell has gone. I personally appreciate being able to sleep in a bit in the morning and it’s also wonderful to be able to eat when I’m hungry and rest when I’m tired! Also, as Johnny said, “You don’t have to ask to go to the bathroom!”

In my opinion, and to my great relief, the whole environment at ISC is more people-friendly. Not to say there are no stresses here; they are simply of a different nature - more in line with a forward flow than an against-a-river struggle.

So, while I am now a “staff member” rather than a “teacher”, it is a job title I embrace and am thankful for. Being a “teacher” was in many ways wonderful and rewarding, but the downsides of the “system” were just too much. Being a staff at ISC, on the other hand - besides being a relief! - is magnificently delightful, tremendously fulfilling and infinitely enriching!*

Nicolette Groeneveld



Memorable Quotes

Dylan(15): “No! No more eensie-weensie spider, *please!*” ... “Isn’t the spider tired yet?” ... “No more spider!”



Kassie(5): “In the summer, I melt like a Popsicle!”

Amanda(16): “Crayons are so cool! I’ve been thinking about them for 20 minutes now!”

Announcements

Phone calls:

Please be aware that the Campus Meeting passed a motion whereby all phone calls for students (with the exception of emergencies) will result in a message being taken and posted on the Student Message “pin strip” in the main hallway. Staff will no longer go on searches for students but will let them know when they see them that they have a message to retrieve.

Open House:

We will be having an Open House for the general public on Tuesday, November 5th from 7:00-9:00 PM. All students who participate in the Open House will be credited hours toward their weekly attendance requirement. If you know anyone who might be interested in getting more information on our school, please let them know about our Open House!

Amanda Art Gallery:

Amanda has set up a gallery display of some of her artwork. We invite you to take a look next time you come in! The Amanda Art Gallery is to be found in the Art Room on the library shelves.

A Place of Peace

At ISC, I hold a vision of peace. I see peace as the only way for our human species to survive. Therefore, to ensure our survival, change must be forthcoming. But where must that change begin? Within each individual. Within me.

I choose to be part of the planetary change by having peace in my life experience. I focus on peace in my personal life and extend that focus to my work life. As such, I hold a vision of peace at ISC.

What does it mean to hold a vision of peace for the school? It means I intend to attract peaceful people to the school and gently help non-peaceful people who are willing to change to become more peaceful.

Do I expect perfection right away? No. But if a student has not been peaceful in the past and violence has been his/her way, I would hope we can find alternatives to the violence. But more than that,

I would hope we can look for and find the *cause* of the violence. Violence is just a symptom, anger is a symptom... what are the *thoughts* that cause the anger and lead to the violence?

I believe the underlying thought that causes anger is “I am not enough.” This thought creates a hole in our hearts and makes us feel powerless. Violence against another is a way of trying to regain a sense of power, but “stealing” power from someone else can never result in us feeling “good enough”. Only filling ourselves with authentic power (Love) can change how we feel and help us to live peacefully. Having our own sense of being “enough” is also the only thing that can protect us when others try to take our power.

How do we refill our “‘I’m okay’ tank” when our experiences have drained it? Positive self-talk, visualizations, butterfly

hugs and doing things we enjoy and are good at can be very helpful. Talking to someone about how we’re feeling can also be immensely valuable.

The bottom line, though, is that being peaceful is a choice that can become a habit. First we must recognize that we are thinking “I am not enough” thoughts and then we must choose to find a positive way to transform our perception of ourselves. Violence won’t do it – not in our personal lives and not in the bigger picture of our species. Choosing peace will give us the personal power we are seeking and from a place of power we will, one person at a time, be able to transform our species.

Pain dealt with by choosing violence only begets more pain. At what point will we decide we’ve suffered enough and choose peace?*

Ric Rosborough

Why the Butterfly Died

There's a story attributed to Henry Miller, the writer, about a little boy in India who went up to a guru who was sitting and looking at something in his hand. The little boy went up and looked at it. He didn't quite understand what it was so he asked the guru, "What is that?"

"It's a cocoon," answered the guru, "Inside the cocoon is a butterfly. Soon the cocoon is going to split, and the butterfly will come out."

"Could I have it?" asked the little boy.

"Yes," said the guru, "but you must promise me that when the cocoon splits and the butterfly starts to come out and is beating its wings to get out of the cocoon, you won't help it. It is important not to help the butterfly by breaking the cocoon apart. It must do it on its own."

The little boy promised, took the cocoon and went home with it. He then sat and watched it. He saw it begin to vibrate and move and quiver, and finally

the cocoon split in half. Inside was a beautiful damp butterfly, frantically beating its wings against the cocoon, trying to get out and not seeming to be able to do it. The little boy desperately wanted to help. Finally, he gave in and pushed the two halves of the cocoon apart. The butterfly sprang out, but as soon as it got out, it fell to the ground and was dead. The little boy picked up the dead butterfly and, in tears, went back to the guru and showed it to him.

"Little boy," said the guru, "You pushed open the cocoon, didn't you?"

"Yes," said the little boy, "I did."

The guru spoke to him gravely, "You don't understand. You didn't understand what you were doing. When the butterfly comes out of the cocoon, the only way it can strengthen its wings is by beating them against the cocoon. It beats against the cocoon so its muscles will grow strong. When you helped it, you prevented it from developing the

muscles it would need to survive."

It's a story every parent and every "educator" should remember. . .

For instance, handing a child the toy he wants instead of letting him crawl across the room for it or try his best to crawl for it; fulfilling his every whim; loading him down with toys and other shiny beautiful things before he really needs or desires them; telling children what to do all the time; setting a fixed curriculum; coercing learning; emphasizing the importance of grades in school. . . all of these things tend to weaken the "muscles" a child should be developing on his own so that when the time comes to function independently, he will have the strength he needs.

So often, what seems harsh or cruel in nature is in reality wisdom and kindness for the time ahead.

Author unknown



Calendar 2002-2003

November 2002

November 11th - Remembrance Day

December 2002

December 20th - Last day of school (Christmas holidays!)

January 2003

January 6th - Back to school

February 2003

February 17th - Family Day

March 2003

March 28th - Last day of school (Spring Break!)

April 2003

April 7th - Back to School

April 18th - Good Friday

April 21st - Easter Monday

May 2003

May 19th - Victoria Day

June 2003

June 26th (Thursday) - Last day of school (Summer holidays!)

