

Character Education in Harbor Creek

During the 2003-2004 academic year character education programs were implemented at the elementary level to enhance an already positive atmosphere in each of the three elementary schools. By focusing more on respect, fairness, responsibility, citizenship, caring, and trustworthiness in our everyday lives at school students will have a greater awareness and appreciation for the characteristics that make a person successful in life. This is not an easy task to accomplish because character education encompasses so many positive ideals, ideals that have always been a part of the teachings in all schools and homes across the country. Each of these six character traits is reinforced regularly to the students so that they have a greater understanding of character education in general and the benefits of demonstrating good character. An assembly by the Hill Brothers kicked off the start of the program to get things rolling. Each year assemblies are planned to promote the goals and objectives of the program. The assemblies have been a great success as the students have learned songs that have brought a sense of reality to the whole idea of being a model citizen at school.

The academic year is broken down into six equal time periods, one for each of the aforementioned "GOOD CHARACTER TRAITS" that the program was based upon. Lessons are taught in each classroom (K-6) at the beginning of each time period emphasizing the character trait that was to be focused on at that particular time. The first day of each week throughout the year there is an announcement that reminds students what the focus is for that week. Students earn positive recognition in classes (actually anywhere at school) for the acts of kindness/good character that they demonstrate towards others. The goal is to have teachers recognize all of the good deeds that they witness. Homeroom classes are rewarded for their "good deeds". Each school has a different system set-up to recognize the students in a positive manner. In some instances there has been competition to be the classroom with the best character in each school. This was not a planned part of the program, but it never hurts to have students focus on doing the right things in regards to behavior or getting long at school.

In each building the overall goal was to have each classroom, kindergarten through grade six, demonstrate their mastery of good character. Klein Elementary uses the symbol from the Good-n-Plenty Candy to promote the fact that they have good students with plenty of character. A bulletin board in the shape of a box of candy is displayed in the front hallway to track how each classroom is working towards reaching their goals. Clark Elementary uses a Rainbow (different color for each grade level) painted in their front lobby to place smiley faces on as the various classrooms strive for their pot of gold (good character) at the end of the rainbow; while Rolling Ridge took a more worldly approach and used the seven continents for their ways to show where each grade level stood in regards to projected goals. Each grade level voted on a mascot/symbol to represent their assigned continent.