

BELIEVE (CONTINUED)

their parents explaining why they have earned that particular gift they want so badly this year. It is a great way to have students practice the writing process and feel really good about some of the progress they have made. The students are expected to write about things that they do well, helping peers, being respectful, working on community champion skills, volunteering, standing up for others, etc. This time, they get to write a letter and help out a wonderful organization all at the same time! As I was listening I became super excited! Once I presented the idea to the class, they were also very excited! Macy's is asking people to write Santa Letters. For each letter that is written, \$1 will be donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, up to \$1,000,000. After presenting this to my students, every student was excited to create their letters. Some even said they wanted to write more than one. Students volunteered to create a memo that informed the other classrooms about Macy's Believe 2010. On December 13th I took their letters to Macy's in Richmond, VA to put in the Santa Mailbox. This was a wonderful way to close out our week at school before the Holiday Break. 🌲



Important Dates to Remember: Winter Break - February 18 - 27, 2011

Little Keswick School's Pine Cone Press

Website: www.littlekeswickschool.net

Edited By: Claudia Hildebrand • Design By: Michael Lyon

Please send your questions or comments to: lksinfo@littlekeswickschool.net



Little Keswick School
P.O. Box 24
Keswick, Virginia. 22947

PINE CONE PRESS

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LITTLE KESWICK SCHOOL

Bringing Students' Unique Potential to Light Since 1963

JANUARY 2011

STANDING UP TO BULLIES

By AUSTIN T.

For the past four years, I have attended Little Keswick School, an all-boys boarding school located in Virginia. Bullying could be a real problem since we all live together, so it is even more important students get along at my school. If I see someone being a bully, I tell them to stop and leave the other student alone because picking on others ultimately makes it worse for everyone.

During a school soccer game, a player on my team refused to keep playing and sat out on the sidelines. He decided to make fun of another player on the field who is overweight. I walked over to the player who was acting like a bully and told him to stop. I pointed out that at least the player he was bullying was on the soccer field still in the game and supporting his teammates instead of sitting out and not playing at all. The bad comments stopped.

Another way to support one another is to be a mentor. At my school, I help new students learn how things are done at school and expose them to new activities. Mentoring students in fishing is my favorite. I teach them which hooks and bait to use to catch certain kinds of fish, how to use lures and how to tie their own knots. I would be happy teaching fishing all day long and have to admit I am sad if they don't catch any fish.

When people participate in an activity together, they get to know each other better. Doing activities together can sometimes prevent kids from picking on one another. Besides fishing, my other favorite activities include soccer, basketball, baseball, board games, woodshop and racing remote-controlled cars on a specially built track. When it snows, I enjoy building snowmen and igloos, as well as racing downhill on a sled.

I was recently honored by my school with the Community Champion Award in recognition of my efforts to stand up to bullying, to include others in activities and to mentor younger students. I'm glad I can make life at my school better for others by helping to stop bullying and by teaching students about fishing. Life is really good when everyone gets along. 🌲



Showing zero tolerance for bullying behavior is just one way Austin makes life better at Little Keswick School.

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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

By DR. KATE BRABENDER

Bullying occurs in the majority of schools across the country today. It leads to lower levels of self-esteem and has a negative impact on a child's academic and social emotional growth. Currently a major effort is underway in America's school systems to combat bullying. Schools are getting better at implementing strategies to deal with this epidemic, but significant problems continue to arise from children picking on other children. Though bullying has recently been spotlighted as a national issue, Little Keswick School has prevented bullying for many years by creating a culture that develops values of respect and dignity that are the cornerstones of the school's community.



Developing Values and Creating Culture

At Little Keswick, we have adopted numerous policies and program elements that directly address bullying, and provide the students with skills to decrease the likelihood of bullying, and learn how to manage it more successfully. While many schools offer programs that teach students to recognize and defend against bullying, LKS focuses on the prevention of bullying by encouraging students to develop values that reflect a sincere belief in treating others with dignity and respect. Our primary tool in helping students develop these values is creating a culture that exemplifies those beliefs. Unlike many schools that utilize a single program to respond to bullying, our school works through many facets of our culture. Staff at the school support these values and understand the potential that every student has in developing social relationships

within each interaction. All staff constantly role model what it means to treat others in dignified ways. Through intensive support from staff, students grow in ways that help them rise above bullying and commit to being a positive influence in our community and in the world beyond our campus.

The Community Action Committee

The Community Action Committee at LKS specifically works to create a curriculum that addresses the issues of bullying in the community and to develop creative interventions to teach the skills necessary to build self-esteem and improve relations. The committee is comprised of teachers, residential shift supervisors, the academic coordinator, an intervention specialist, and a clinical psychologist. This group meets monthly to discuss topics for classroom and dorm meetings that create themes and skill-based lessons that allow the students to engage in fun activities while simultaneously building competencies to navigate the social arena. While other school programs focus on how to directly deal with bullies, this approach places more emphasis on the concept of building awareness and confidence in student's skills to manage peer dynamics. Instead of focusing on what not to do such as bullying, the program builds more positive skill sets in order that the students feel equipped to manage more challenging peer situations at school and outside of our community.

Circle of Champions

Monthly student meetings known as the "Circle of Champions" address specific skill areas that will allow students to support the victim, indirectly defuse the situation, and/or know where to go for help. We emphasize to our students that there is more than one way to create a positive peer culture in our community.

A SEASON OF GIVING

By JIM GAUL

Continuing what has now become an annual tradition, the Student Council recently conducted a holiday food drive benefiting the Charlottesville Salvation Army Soup Kitchen. This year's donation of 12,711 tokens dollars was the sole product of students contributing through the school store. This meant that during the two week drive, many students chose to forgo buying items for themselves and instead gave their money to help those who are less fortunate. This money was used to purchase non-perishable food items at Sam's Club which were then taken to the soup kitchen. In addition to the food, the Student Council also donated several hand crafted wooden trains built by the shop classes over the last few weeks. The Charlottesville Corps of The Salvation Army was established in 1912 as a



place where the needy in the city could go to get a hot meal and free lodging for the night. In the ninety years that it has been located in downtown Charlottesville, it has provided thousands upon thousands of hot meals and nights of safe lodging. Their mission, "to meet human needs without discrimination", is in keeping with our school's core values and further reinforces our students' experience of the greater community. 🌲

MACY'S BELIEVE 2010

By MARY QUINN LAWRENCE

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants wishes to children with life threatening medical conditions to enhance their short lives with optimism, vigor, and happiness. The foundation was founded in 1980, when a group of caring volunteers helped a young boy fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer. Today, the foundation is the largest wish-granting charity in the world. It has a total of 64 chapters in the United States and surrounding territories. Every 40 minutes, the Make-A-Wish Foundation grants a wish to a child, with the help of very generous donors and close to 25,000 volunteers worldwide. Since its beginning in 1980 the Foundation has granted over 200,000 wishes.

The Holidays are a time to give and knowing my students, I knew they would be excited to share in this spirit with me, whether or not they "believe in Santa Claus" or celebrate Christmas as a Holiday.

One morning on the way to work, I heard an ad for the Macy's Believe 2010 on the radio. I was excited, because normally I have students practice their writing skills by writing letters to



Yes Virginia there is a Santa Clause!

(CONTINUED AS "BELIEVE" ON BACK PAGE)

TO THE STUDENTS AND STAFF AT LKS

FROM GRAHAM ANDREAE (A FORMER LKS STUDENT)



Hey Guys. I just wanted to send a note from someone that has been there at LKS and worked as hard as you all are right now. I want you to know, even though it can seem like it takes a long time, there are ways to really get to your goals. Break the old habits. Make choices like avoiding a disagreement or an argument. Choose not to say that mean thing. It's the choices you make despite how you feel that are the most important. Make the right choice. When you can do that even though someone is making you angry or sad that's when you've grown. When you can do that the cycle is broken and life gets a lot better. That's my advice to you.

As for me I'm a sophomore at Christchurch School. I just got a 3.88 GPA for the 1st quarter this year. I am involved in living campus, which helps our local environment. I am also on the JV golf team. I am jealous of you guys having a dog. I have developed my skills with computers creating art. I now do a lot of photography both in Photoshop (crazy digital) and just regular photography. I occasionally design things digitally like chairs and houses. Yes, there is more freedom, so work hard. 🌲

PRODUCT OF TEAMWORK

BY JUSTIN STARNES

During the first practice of our fall season, I witnessed a play that foreshadowed the success of the LKS soccer team this year. Aspiring forward, Noah W, who had told me numerous times of the efforts he'd made over the summer to train for the coming season, took a great first touch on the ball that allowed him to slide between two defenders. Breaking toward the goal and eager to earn a role as a starting forward, Noah took one touch too many as an opposing player and veteran midfielder, Jon S, put himself between the ball and Noah with a hard but legal shoulder bump. Caught off balance, Noah fell hard, skidding his palms and knees on the dry August grass, as Jon cleared the ball out of scoring position. I watched eagerly as Noah stood, and I recognized this play as a moment of truth: Would a conflict ensue between these highly capable players? Or would they recognize each other as teammates, competing in the moment but ultimately working toward a common goal? Noah extended his hand for a shake, which was gladly accepted by Jon. I knew I would be able to use this moment to

recognize Noah during a Community Meeting.

Sure enough, a few weeks later, I was reciting the play as feedback to acknowledge Noah for receiving the Community Champion Award. In that moment, when Noah stood and extended his hand to Jon, the Community Champion Award was not motivating him. He was focused on being a productive member of a team. Likewise, the efforts put forth by all players who participated in the LKS soccer season were not motivated by the prospect of an undefeated season, but by a common goal to support each other and grow together. The result, an undefeated, 7-0-1 season, was a byproduct and something to really remember their combined efforts by.

Indeed, three of our closest matches required players to lift each other up after losing a lead in the score, just like Noah was willing to acknowledge Jon's efforts and stay positive after losing the ball to him during our first practice. 🌲



in which he explains why the award is important to him:

"I was recently honored... with the Community Champion Award in recognition of my efforts to stand up to bullying, to include others in activities, and to mentor younger students. I'm glad I can make life at my school better for others by helping to stop bullying and by teaching students... Life is really good when everyone gets along."

Recently an LKS alumnus became aware of the fact that several students were participating in cyber bullying of another student. That former student spoke directly to the school to help gain support for the child that was being victimized and spoke directly to the other students and encouraged them to change their actions. This former student maintained his commitment to being a positive influence after leaving the school. These stories illustrate how our focus on each student's personal commitment in supporting a community wide culture of respect has helped shape the students into leaders who promote mutual growth and understanding and respect for all people.

The main goal is to have a more positive peer culture; this should have a direct impact on the amount of bullying that occurs in the school. This year the theme for the schools bullying program is focused around Extreme Sports and the concept that extreme athletes develop many different skills in order to perform their sport. The student's develop a large skill base, as well as an awareness of what skills or strategies are most useful in specific situations. Many of the classroom lessons include hands-on activities which increase engagement and optimize the learning environment of the students.

Community Champion Award

One of the ways the school recognizes students who exemplify the characteristics of a positive role model in the community and someone who supports his peers is through the weekly Community Champion Award. Each week one student earns this award for supporting his peers for assisting students and showing respect for self and others in the community. By learning these skills students transition from the school prepared and empowered to make change.

Celebrating Commitment

One recent recipient of this award wrote an article in his family's neighborhood newspaper



The program continues to evolve to meet the needs of our students specifically, and is addressing ways to generalize these skills to situations outside of LKS. 🌲

HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION



Little Keswick School enjoys a rich tradition of Halloween celebration. While we emphasize only the less ghoulish aspects of the tradition, our boys enjoy the festive and recreational celebration. There is great anticipation leading up to Halloween day, culminating in many events and activities when the day finally arrives. To keep our celebration consistent with community values, we choose a theme each year to guide choices in costumes and decorations. Posters providing hints as to the year's organizing theme are displayed starting in mid September, building a high level of curiosity in the weeks preceding the event. The theme itself is kept top secret until October 1st. Students are encouraged to acquire their costume over Parent's Weekend. Then, the real fun starts. The Depot gets a spooky makeover and half the gym transforms into a "haunted carnival." Doors and windows morph into canvases with goblins and tricksters. Pumpkins are creatively carved and displayed with pride.

Our ongoing efforts toward individualization have to be extended even to planning for seasonal celebrations. Attention is given to stimulus levels in each of the various venues, and designed according to the specific needs of the students that will be participating in the events. This year, for example, one parent generously donated a

really cool giant spider. He is huge, fun, and he seems harmless enough. However, before we could prudently use the spider, we checked that there were no students who had significant arachnophobia. Once it was determined that there were no students with arachnophobia, we planned to use the spider at the entrance to the haunted carnival. We also created an alternate entrance, just in case a student decided that this doorman was too provocative.

In the end, all the thought and preparation paid off, and this year's celebration was a big success. Students rotated between four events: a hay ride, "Save the Citizen," a game in which they got to be the super hero, a donut-eating competition, and the haunted carnival which was run by the Yellow House students. Students trick-or-treat stations were visited at different buildings around campus while students passed from one event to the next. In the evening after the four major events, students had a haunted dinner which featured the donut eating championship. Students completed the evening back in their dorms to watch scary movies (well not that scary). Meanwhile, the Upper Levels had their own special party in the activity room. 🌲

