

Weekly Notes
January 23, 2015

Education is inherently about relationships. We know this based on the experiences of our own teachers and staff at LFS, based on all the research in educational psychology, and on the long history of Friends education. Paul Lacey, a prominent Quaker educator, wrote, "The important affinities between Quakerism and various philosophies of education [is that they] all spring from an idealism about human possibilities and a conviction that individuals grow into their best selves when supported and sustained by a healthy community." The best way to pursue knowledge is in a community that recognizes the power of collaboration and continuing revelation. The social aspect of education is thus so important for making confident adults with strong inter-personal and intra-personal intelligences.

This centrality of relationships was beautifully illustrated this week. Today, for gathering, Teacher Susie's class went around to individual rooms to read aloud new illustrated children's books that are potential candidates for the Caldecott award and to share their own book reviews. These gatherings in each classroom show the strong relationships among the students, the respect of the audience, the trust that allows students to share their ideas, and the power of collaborative exploration.

Another example of the power of relationships is the project begun yesterday by the fifth and sixth grades at Germantown Home, a nursing home in Philadelphia. Intergenerational relationships are powerful. Over the course of eight weeks, the class will visit weekly to learn how to take oral histories and transform what they learn into visual images and create a cloth representing the various stages of the seniors' lives. The seniors will create one cloth for their visions of the students' futures. These clothes will be displayed at a show of professional artists at the Tyler School of Art in May and June.

Yesterday, at their initial visit, the students had sensitivity training as to what it feels like to age. They had to do certain things including but not limited to wearing different glasses, and drawing while looking over their shoulders through a mirror. These exercises gave them a sense of hearing loss, visual impairment, memory loss and mobility issues. The training also included strategies for assisting older adults. The program allows our students to develop relationships with people they do not know, to practice social skills and to increase their emotional IQ.

On a final note, Teacher Joel Kenreuther will not be returning as our music teacher. He has another job. We are very grateful to how he was able to assist the music program and share his many gifts. We are currently looking for another music teacher, and I have been filling in when I am able. I will keep you informed of our progress.

Have a wonderful weekend.