

Dear Families,

I am grateful every day for the old age handicaps I am suffering so obviously here at our school, for without fail some one or other of our children takes notice and immediately is moved personally and comes running over to help me. Their caring is not only a sign of their love but most importantly also living proof that we the parents and educators are succeeding in creating with our children a learning community that is aflame with personal kindness – a Twenty-First Century Shangri-La right here and now!

Sure, because of our students' high skill scores on the standardized tests, we are known in town as a Class A academic school, but love trumps mere schooling every time and a school without such expressed kindness would be unnatural -- a chilly place – not right for human beings. I am happy that our community has developed home-like, individually responsive learning environments wherein beings are beloved be they young or old. And I as one of your elders know at long last that doing such is what life is meant to be– the creation of a beloved community is our very purpose of being.

Every other day in the morning I am now presenting a philosophy seminar to a merry band of middle school seekers of wisdom. I send them out into our school community on a quest to solve the basic query that is the foundation of a successful life here on earth: *What is my purpose? Why have I been given my existence as a Person? Who am I? What am I here for? In what ways do I matter?* Following the advice of one of my own mentors (Paul of Tarsus), to help these young Socrates discover themselves and to find their surprising personal connections within this our beloved community, I then told them to shine their lights on whatever they find around their present lives that is *true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable* – and to meditate on whatsoever they perceive that is so *excellent, or praiseworthy*. Take it all in! I urge them. It is food for your soul – and as I learned a long time ago, you are what you eat.

Finally, I explain that when such nourishment becomes the stuff of their daily diet, there will be developing deep inside them the Three C's necessary for the kind of heroic life required of them if they are to build a "New World" – *courage, compassion, and creativity*. This then is their solemn purpose: bravely and caringly help create a world that is based on the most divine virtue: *Kindness*.

Peace,
Paul