



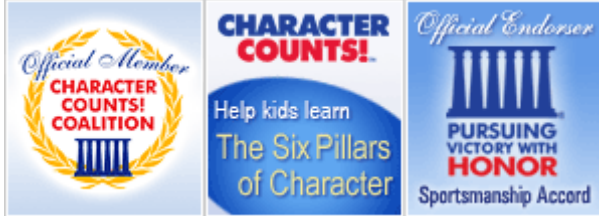
The Panther Preview!



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Character Counts Corner

Unkind Words Are Weapons

With four teenage daughters, I frequently find myself correcting, disciplining, or simply protesting unnecessary and unkind comments certain to anger or wound a sister and evoke counterattacks that fill the air with nastiness.

Hoping to get them to think before they speak in the future, I often ask, "What did you expect to accomplish by that remark?" and "Did it make things better or worse?" It rarely makes a difference.

It's as if their instinct to express anger or utter sarcasm, accusations, and complaints is too strong to allow for wise strategies like "Think before you speak" to operate.

It disappoints and frustrates me that my children are often unkind to one another and so quick to make foolish comments that have no constructive purpose. Yet it's even more troublesome when adults engage in the same senseless and destructive behavior.

It may be a husband's unfiltered remark about his wife's smothering style, a wife's dig about her husband's lack of energy, a parents' comment, "That's why you have no friends" or "Why can't you be more like your brother?" or an aunt's unwanted advice, "If you want to get married, lose weight."

Often the content of a remark is objectively objectionable and they never should have been uttered, but tone, timing, or setting can make even seemingly harmless observations hurtful.

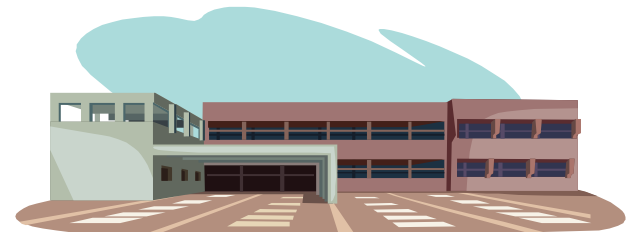
We have to remember that words are weapons, sometimes weapons of mass destruction. Verbal assaulters may defend their unguided missiles with claimed innocence: "I didn't mean it that way" when the real question is "How was the remark likely to be received?"

Another lame excuse is "I was just telling the truth," without considering whether that truth needed to be said. Honesty does not preclude tact. It's not a sin to have an unexpressed thought.

We may not always be able to shield ourselves from the darts and arrows of inconsiderate or mean-spirited folks, but we can resolve to be more thoughtful in our own communications.

We can be more kind more consistently. We can follow the Golden Rule and a few other age-old wisdoms like: "Think before you speak" and "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.



School and Community Events

Santa Claus is Coming to Town!

Santa will make his annual appearances in our communities in the coming weeks. The schedule follows:

Douglas: Santa will visit on December 10th from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Douglas Community Center, arriving by fire truck. He will be looking for kids of all ages that like candy, crafts, and cookies.

Bennet: Santa will arrive in Bennet on December 17th at 10:00 a.m. at the Bennet Elementary Gym. Refreshments will be served and Adam Schmidt, juggler, will present a program. The event is sponsored by the Bennet Builders and S.A.L.



Palmyra: Santa hits the Palmyra Senior Center on December 10th, from 9:30 to 11:30 p.m. There will be things to do while you wait, along with goodies to eat. The Palmyra Action League is preparing for this special event.

Elementary Boosters To Meet on Tuesday

The Bennet Elementary Boosters will be meeting on Tuesday, December 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the Bennet Library.

Caring Day Next Week

On Thursday, December 15th, students and staff will once again be wearing red to remember to practice the Pillar of CARING. Being a person of character means

being caring. Wear red and celebrate CARING DAY on Wednesday!

Post Prom Meeting at Bennet

There will be a Post Prom Parents Meeting on Sunday, December 11th, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria at Bennet Elementary School.

Bennet Elementary Movie Day Nets Large Donation for Area Food Pantry

Our annual Bennet Elementary Movie Matinee brought in a large donation for the local food pantry. Students were asked to bring in a canned food item as admission. Over 90 students were present for the three movies. Thanks to all the students and families for your donations. Thanks to the Bennet Elementary Boosters for all their help and food donations for the students on movie day. Four large boxes of canned food items were taken to the local food pantry in Palmyra.



Tasa P, Ben P, and Anjali M, sorted all of the food donated from our Movie Matinee into different categories before it was taken to the Food Pantry in Palmyra.

Cheer Camp Coming to Palmyra

The Palmyra Cheerleaders will host a Cheer Camp at Palmyra High School on Saturday, January 21st, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Your cheerleader will learn cheers, jumps, and a routine for their age group. They will make signs and posters, enjoy a snack and prepare a cheer to be performed at halftime of the Boys varsity basketball game. The cost of the cheer camp is \$25, with registration due by Friday, January 13th. A flyer with registration form is included with today's newsletter. Extra

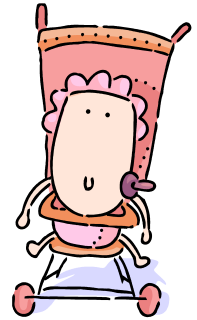


registrations are available in the office.

Baby Sitter's Training offered by Red Cross

The American Red Cross – Cornhusker Chapter will be offering a Baby Sitter's Training on Thursday, December 29th, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The training will take place at 220 Oakcreek Drive in Lincoln. Participants will learn how to:

- Supervise children and infants
- Perform basic child-care skills such as diapering and feeding
- Choose safe games and toys
- Handle bedtime and discipline issues
- Identify safety hazards and prevent injuries
- Care for common injuries and emergencies, such as choking, burns, cuts, and bee stings
- Communicate effectively with parents
- Find and interview for babysitting jobs



The cost of the class is \$85. And students are asked to bring a sack lunch and drink. For more information or to register, call 1 – 800- RED-CROSS or visit: www.redcross.org/takeaclass

Bennet to Host Retreat for 4th – 6th Grades

Bennet Elementary and Youth Frontiers are proud to offer the Youth Frontiers Kindness retreat for our 4th, 5th and 6th grade students. This retreat is scheduled to take place on Thursday, December 15, 2011, from 9:00 – 1:30 in the school gym at Bennet Elementary School.

Over the last two decades, Youth Frontiers has built an organization on the idea of fostering safe, positive school communities, where students and educators can thrive emotionally, socially and, therefore, academically. Founder of Youth Frontiers, Joseph Cavanaugh says, "We are not succeeding as a society if our children receive an 'A' in Math... and an 'F' in life."

The Youth Frontiers Kindness Retreat helps build a more caring school community by engaging students in activities that demonstrate the painful effects of bullying and emphasize the value of kindness. Elementary school students experience the positive effect of the kindness boomerang during a high-energy day with classmates. Students learn that, like the golden rule, if they want to catch kindness, they've got to throw the kindness boomerang out there! The retreat also teaches students how to be a hero by treating others with kindness and challenges them to reduce bullying in their school.

For more information on Youth Frontiers, go to their website at www.youthfrontiers.org