



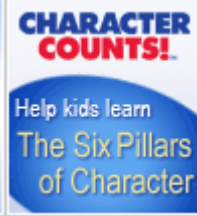
The Panther Preview!



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Character Counts Corner

Changing the World One Bite at a Time

About twenty-five years ago, I founded the Joseph & Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics in honor of my parents because I wanted to change the world for the better. My goal and strategy to achieve change is captured in a short mission statement: "To improve the ethical quality of society by changing personal and organizational decision making and behavior."

I knew I was tackling a huge issue, but like those who devote their lives to other monumental causes like ending world hunger or eradicating disease, I was, and am, driven by the conviction that any movement toward a worthy goal is worthy if it brings us even a little bit closer to the goal.

It's like the answer to the question: "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer: "One bite at a time." Meaningful progress toward any meaningful goal is incremental. So, we begin to end world hunger by feeding as many people as we can and creating resources and systems that will produce and distribute more food. We eradicate disease by treating those who have it and creating antidotes and methods that combat or prevent the causes of the disease.

So, my strategy to improve the ethical quality of society was, and is, to instill and strengthen the ethical consciousness and commitment of children and adults, stimulate their moral courage to do the right thing even when it costs more than they want to pay, and enhance their ability to achieve their goals ethically.

At the beginning, our efforts focused almost exclusively on training. We defined and promoted fundamental ethical principles and set out to convince people to live up to them. Using the mantra "You don't have to be sick to get better," we sought to improve behavior by enhancing awareness of ethical issues, strengthening the commitment to do what's right, and providing decision-making strategies.

We've had many successes over the years, particularly in schools, but our impact has not been as deep or sustainable as we hoped because we failed to understand that every aspect of our approach required people to change the way they think and act. And we

underestimated how difficult it is to truly change people and organizational culture.

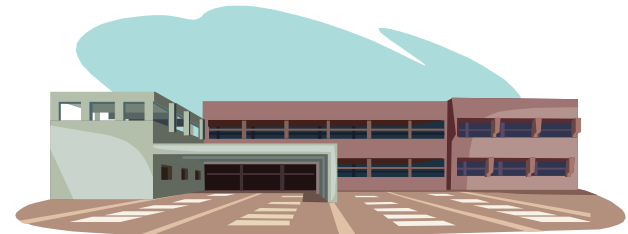
We weren't alone. According to Professor John Kotter in the *Harvard Business Review*, "Despite all the rhetoric, books, effort, and money thrown into change efforts in organizations today, most fail." He cites studies revealing that about two-thirds of the "Total Quality Management" and "Re-engineering" initiatives were abandoned for failing to accomplish the desired business results.

Personal change efforts ranging from New Year's resolutions to systematic weight loss programs have similar failure rates. There is, however, a growing body of research and creative thinking about achieving profound and lasting change. We have been infusing new theories and techniques in our character development programs (most particularly in Puerto Rico) and in our work with corporations and public agencies to create effective and sustainable ethical cultures.

The point is, change is hard, but it's not impossible.

I hope you'll join me in the next few days to hear about strategies that work.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.



School and Community Events

Palmyra Memorial Library to Host Movie Night

The recently accredited Palmyra Memorial Library will host a movie night on Friday, January 20th, at the Palmyra Community Center. Showtime is 7:00 p.m., but please come at 6:30 to reserve your seat. Snacks will be provided, while supplies last. You may wear your pajamas if you would like and bring a pillow and blanket. A movie



has not been selected yet, so please contact the Librarian and let her know what movie you would like to see! The Library staff is looking forward to seeing you on the 20th!

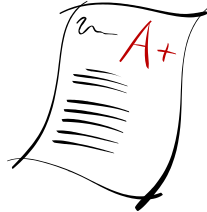
Cheer Camp Coming to Palmyra Saturday!

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.



P-T Conferences Approaching

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 7th. Second semester P-T Conferences for Bennet Elementary will be taking place from 2:00 – 8:00 p.m. on that day. School will dismiss at 1:10 p.m. at Bennet and 1:30 at the High School for the conferences. **After School Rec. Program will be held on that day.**



We will send home notes about the times for your children's conferences on Friday, January 27th. If you have any questions about your times or wish to change the times you have been given, please contact the school at 782-3535 and we will do our best to work out a more convenient time.



Bennet Community Church Wants to Start Elementary Bell Choir

The Bennet Community Church is looking to start up a 4th – 6th grade bell choir. Interested persons can contact choir director, Cathy Holdsworth at 402-780-6793. It is not a requirement to attend the Bennet Community Church. Practices are on Wednesday evenings.

Accelerated Reader Awards

Students that qualified for the second quarter A.R. Comprehension Award were treated to a Chips and Salsa Party last Friday. In order to qualify, students had to have acquired 15 points on AR quizzes during the second qtr. and maintain an 80% average or higher on their quizzes. This quarter, we had 104 students in grades 1-6 qualify for the comprehension award, which was up significantly. Next quarter, those qualifying for the AR Comprehension Award will get to enjoy a pizza party.

Bennet Elementary Students Enjoy Chips and Salsa for Achievement in Accelerated Reader



Kanyon T, D.J. S, Kyla D, Kamrin L, Brook D, Marley E, Jaiden J, Nima F, Serenity W, and Kaylie R. enjoy their chips and salsa at the A.R. Comprehension Award Party last week.



Among the sixth grade students at the chips and salsa party were Wesley S, Grace B, Justin H, Abbie S, Gavin T, Matthew H, Riley D, Kessler D, Kristopher P, Thomas D, and Andrew B.

Sixth Grade Attends Young People's Symphony



Members of the sixth grade class attended the annual "Young People's Symphony" at the Leid Center in Lincoln on Thursday, January 19th. They heard a number of musical selections based on the book, "The Composer is Dead," by Lemony Snicket. It was as one sixth grade student commented, on their return to school, "Pretty Awesome."