



# CHARACTER

PUBLISHED BY THE CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ETHICS AND CHARACTER  
AT THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY AND THE ASCD CHARACTER EDUCATION NETWORK

CAEC Spring Institute: *The Ethic of Caring...* See page 8

## The Ethic of Caring

# Teaching Themes of Care

By Dr. Nel Noddings

Excerpts reproduced with permission from Phi Delta Kappan v. 76 p. 675-9 May 1995

SOME educators today—and I include myself among them—would like to see a complete reorganization of the school curriculum. We would like to give a central place to the questions and issues that lie at the core of human existence. One possibility would be to organize the curriculum around themes of care—caring for self, for intimate others, for strangers and global others, for the natural world and its nonhuman creatures, for the human-made world, and for ideas.<sup>1</sup>

*There is much to be gained, both academically and humanly, by including themes of care in our curriculum.*

A realistic assessment of schooling in the present political climate makes it clear that such a plan is not likely to be implemented. However, we can use the rich vocabulary of care in educational planning and introduce themes of care into regular subject-matter classes. In this article, I will first give a brief rationale for teaching themes of care; second, I will suggest ways of choosing and organizing such themes; and, finally, I'll say a bit about the structures required to support such teaching.

### Why Teach Caring?

In an age when violence among schoolchildren is at an unprecedented level, when children are bearing children with little knowledge of how to care for

them, when the society and even the schools often concentrate on materialistic messages, it may be unnecessary to argue that we should care more genuinely for our children and teach them to care. However, many otherwise reasonable people seem to believe that our educational problems consist largely of low scores on achievement tests. My contention is, first, that we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others.

There is much to be gained, both academically and humanly, by including themes of care in our curriculum. First, such inclusion may well expand our stu-

### Content Highlights

- 1 Teaching Themes of Care

---

- 6 From the Director

---

- 8 CAEC Spring Institute:  
*The Ethic of Caring*

---

- 8 From the Trenches
  - *Caring in Education*
  - *Caring: At the Heart of an Educator's Role*
  - *Disturbing Behavior in the Classroom: A Caring Perspective*

---

- 13 On the Homefront
  - *Modeling the Virtue of Caring*

dents' cultural literacy. For example, as we discuss in math classes the attempts of great mathematicians to prove the existence of God or to reconcile a God who is all good with the reality of evil in the world, students will hear names, ideas, and words that are not part of the standard curriculum. Although such incidental learning cannot replace the systematic and sequential learning required by those who plan careers in mathematically oriented fields, it can be powerful in expanding students' cultural horizons and in inspiring further study.

Second, themes of care help us to connect the standard subjects. The use of literature in mathematics classes, of history in science classes, and of art and music in all classes can give students a feeling of the wholeness in their education. After all, why should they seriously study five

*To have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, and lovable people is not anti-intellectual. Rather, it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents.*

different subjects if their teachers, who are educated people, only seem to know and appreciate one?

Third, themes of care connect our students and our subjects to great existential questions. What is the meaning of life? Are there gods? How should I live?

Fourth, sharing such themes can connect us person-to-person. When teachers discuss themes of care, they may become real persons to their students and so enable them to construct new knowledge.

Finally, I should emphasize that caring is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling that makes people kind and likable. Caring implies a continuous search for competence. When we care, we want to do our very best for the objects of our care. To have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, and lovable people is not anti-intellectual. Rather, it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents. Not all human beings are good at or interested in mathematics, science, or British literature. But all humans can be helped to lead lives of deep concern for others, for the natural world and its creatures, and for the preservation of the human-made world. They can be led to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to make positive contributions, regardless of the occupation they may choose.

### Choosing and Organizing Themes of Care

Care is conveyed in many ways. At the institutional level, schools can be organized to provide continuity and support for relationships of care and trust.<sup>2</sup> At the individual level, parents and teachers show their caring through characteristic forms of attention: by cooperating in children's activities, by sharing their own

dreams and doubts, and by providing carefully for the steady growth of the children in their charge. Personal manifestations of care are probably more important in children's lives than any particular curriculum or pattern of pedagogy.

However, curriculum can be selected with caring in mind. That is, educators can manifest their care in the choice of curriculum, and appropriately chosen curriculum can contribute to the growth of children as carers. Within each large domain of care, many topics are suitable for thematic units: in the domain of "caring for self," for example, we might consider life stages, spiritual growth, and what it means to develop an admirable character; in exploring the topic of caring for intimate others, we might include units on love, friendship, and parenting; under the theme of caring for strangers and global others, we might study war, poverty, and tolerance; in addressing the idea of caring for the human-made world, we might encourage competence with the machines that surround us and a real appreciation for the marvels of technology. Many other examples exist. Furthermore, there are at least two different ways to approach the development of such themes: units can be constructed by interdisciplinary teams, or themes can be identified by individual teachers and addressed periodically throughout a year's or semester's work.

The interdisciplinary approach is familiar in core programs, and such programs are becoming more and more popular at the middle school level. One key to a successful interdisciplinary unit is the degree of genuinely enthusiastic support it receives from the teachers involved. Too often, arbitrary or artificial groupings are formed, and teachers are forced to make



#### Information about CHARACTER

*CHARACTER* is published by ASCD's Character Education Network and the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at the School of Education at Boston University. The newsletter is sponsored in part by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), but is not an official publication of ASCD.

For a list of topics covered in previous issues of *CHARACTER*, please contact the CAEC at [caec@bu.edu](mailto:caec@bu.edu) or call 617-353-3262.

#### Staff

Editor: Bernice Lerner, Ed.D.  
Managing Editor: Lauren K. Terry

Designed and produced by the Office of Creative Services at Boston University.

0207 100536

contributions that they themselves do not value highly. For example, math and science teachers are sometimes automatically lumped together, and rich humanistic possibilities may be lost. If I, as a math teacher, want to include historical, biographical, and literary topics in my math lessons, I might prefer to work with English and social studies teachers. Thus it is important to involve teachers in the initial selection of broad areas for themes, as well as in their implementation.

Such interdisciplinary arrangements also work well at the college level. I recently received a copy of the syllabus for a college course titled "The Search for Meaning," which was co-taught by an economist, a university chaplain, and a psychiatrist.<sup>3</sup> The course is interdisciplinary, intellectually rich, and aimed squarely at the central questions of life.

At the high school level, where students desperately need to engage in the

The teachers should agree on some core ideas related to caring that will be discussed in all classes, but beyond the central commitment to address themes of care, the topics can be handled in whatever way seems suitable in a given subject.

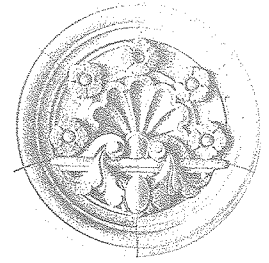
Consider, for example, what a mathematics class might contribute to a unit on crime. Statistical information might be gathered on the location and number of crimes, on rates for various kinds of crime, on the ages of offenders, and on the cost to society; graphs and charts could be constructed. Data on changes in crime rates could be assembled. Intriguing questions could be asked: Were property crime rates lower when penalties were more severe—when, for example, even children were hanged as thieves? What does an average criminal case cost by way of lawyers' fees, police investigation, and court processing? Does it cost

might read *Oliver Twist* and they might also study and discuss the social conditions that seemed to promote crime in 19th-century England. Do similar conditions exist in our country today? The selection of materials could include both classic works and modern stories and films. Students might even be introduced to some of the mystery stories that adults read so avidly on airplanes and beaches, and teachers could be engaged in lively discussion about the comparative value of the various stories.

Science teachers might find that a unit on crime would enrich their teaching of evolution. They could bring up the topic of social Darwinism, which played such a strong role in social policy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. To what degree are criminal tendencies inherited? Should children be tested for the genetic defects that are suspected of predisposing some people to crime? Are females less competent than males in moral reasoning? (Why did some scientists and philosophers think this was true?) Why do males commit so many more violent acts than females?

Teachers of the arts can also be involved. A unit on crime might provide a wonderful opportunity to critique "gangsta rap" and other currently popular forms of music. Students might profitably learn how the control of art contributed to national criminality during the Nazi era. These are ideas that pop into my mind; far more varied and richer ideas will come from teachers who specialize in these subjects.

Caring teachers must help students make wise decisions about what information they will share about themselves. On the one hand, teachers want their students to express themselves and to trust in and consult them. On the other hand, teachers have an obligation to protect immature students from making disclosures they might later regret. There is an



*Personal manifestations of care are probably more important in children's lives than any particular curriculum or pattern of pedagogy.*

study and practice of caring, it is harder to form interdisciplinary teams. A conflict arises as teachers acknowledge the intensity of the subject-matter preparation their students need for further education. Good teachers often wish there were time in the day to co-teach unconventional topics of great importance, and they even admit that their students are not getting what they need for full personal development. But they feel constrained by the requirements of a highly competitive world and the structures of schooling established by that world.

Is there a way out of this conflict? Imaginative, like-minded teachers might agree to emphasize a particular theme in their separate classes. Such themes as war, poverty, crime, racism, or sexism can be addressed in almost every subject area.

more to house a youth in a detention center or in an elite private school?

None of this would have to occupy a full period every day. The regular sequential work of the math class could go on at a slightly reduced rate (e.g., fewer textbook exercises as homework), and the work on crime could proceed in the form of interdisciplinary projects over a considerable period of time. Most important would be the continual reminder in all classes that the topic is part of a larger theme of caring for strangers and fellow citizens. It takes only a few minutes to talk about what it means to live in safety, to trust one's neighbors, to feel secure in greeting strangers.

English and social studies teachers would obviously have much to contribute to a unit on crime. For example, students

ethical problem here; a danger of intrusiveness and lack of respect in methods that fail to recognize the vulnerability of students. Therefore, as teachers plan units and lessons on moral issues, they should anticipate the tough problems that may arise. I am arguing here that it is morally irresponsible to simply ignore existential questions and themes of care; we must attend to them. But it is equally irresponsible to approach these deep concerns without caution and careful preparation.

So far I have discussed two ways of organizing interdisciplinary units on

Other mathematics teachers might use an interest in architecture and design, art, music, or machinery as continuing themes in the domain of "caring for the human-made world." Still others might introduce the mathematics of living things; the possibilities are endless. In choosing and pursuing these themes, teachers are both helping their students learn to care and demonstrating their own caring by sharing interests that go well beyond the demands of textbook pedagogy.

Still another way to introduce themes

then ask about the special contributions and limitations of various individuals and groups.

## Supporting Structures

What kind of schools and teacher preparation are required, if themes of care are to be taught effectively? First, care must be taken seriously as a major purpose of schools; that is, educators must recognize that caring for students is fundamental in teaching and that developing people with a strong capacity for care is a major objective of responsible education. Schools properly pursue many other objectives—developing artistic talent, promoting multicultural understanding, diversifying curriculum to meet the academic and vocational needs of all students, forging connections with community agencies and parents, and so on. Schools cannot be single-purpose institutions.

Once it is recognized that school is a place in which students are cared for and learn to care, that recognition should be powerful in guiding policy. In the late 1950s, schools in the U.S. placed the curriculum at the top of the educational priority list. Because the nation's leaders wanted schools to provide high-powered courses in mathematics and science, it was recommended that small high schools be replaced by efficient larger structures complete with sophisticated laboratories and specialist teachers. All over the country, small schools were closed, and students were herded into larger facilities with "more offerings." We did not think carefully about schools as communities and about what might be lost as we pursued a curriculum-driven ideal.

Today many educators are calling for smaller schools and more family-like groupings. These are good proposals, but teachers,

*I am arguing here that it is morally irresponsible to simply ignore existential questions and themes of care; we must attend to them.*

themes of care. In one, teachers actually teach together in teams; in the other, teachers agree on a theme and a central focus on care, but they do what they can, when they can, in their own classrooms. A variation on this second way—which is also open to teachers who have to work alone—is to choose several themes and weave them into regular course material over an entire semester or year. The particular themes will depend on the interests and preparation of each teacher.

For example, if I were teaching high school mathematics today, I would use religious/existential questions as a pervasive theme because the biographies of mathematicians are filled with accounts of their speculations on matters of God, other dimensions, and the infinite—and because these topics fascinate me. There are so many wonderful stories to be told: Descartes' proof of the existence of God, Pascal's famous wager, Plato's world of forms, Newton's attempt to verify Biblical chronology, and mystical speculations on the infinite.<sup>4</sup> Some of these stories can be told as rich "asides"; others might occupy several class periods.

of care into regular classrooms is to be prepared to respond spontaneously to events that occur in the school or in the neighborhood. All teachers should be prepared to respond to the needs of students who are suffering from the death of friends, conflicts between groups of students, pressure to use drugs or to engage in sex, and other troubles so rampant in the lives of today's children. Too often schools rely on experts—"grief counselors" and the like—when what children really need is the compassion of adults who represent constancy and care in their lives. Artificially separating the emotional, academic, and moral care of children into tasks for specially designated experts contributes to the fragmentation of life in schools.

Of course, I do not mean to imply that experts are unnecessary, nor do I mean to suggest that some matters should not be reserved for parents or psychologists. But our society has gone too far in compartmentalizing the care of its children. When we ask whose job it is to teach children how to care, an appropriate response is, "Everyone's." Having accepted universal responsibility, we can

parents, and students should be engaged in continuing discussion about what they are trying to achieve through the new arrangements. For example, if test scores do not immediately rise, participants should be courageous in explaining that test scores were not the main object of the changes. Most of us who argue for caring in schools are intuitively quite sure that children in such settings will in fact become more competent learners. But, if they cannot prove their academic competence in a prescribed period of time, should we give up on caring and on teaching them to care? That would be foolish. There is more to life and learning than the academic proficiency demonstrated by test scores.

In addition to steadfastness of purpose, schools must make it possible for students and teachers to stay together for several years so that mutual trust can develop and students can feel a sense of belonging in their "schoolhome."<sup>5</sup>

More than one scheme of organization can satisfy the need for continuity. Elementary school children can stay with the same teacher for several years, or they can work with a stable team of specialist teachers for several years. At the high school level, the same specialist teachers might work with students throughout their years in high school.

A policy of keeping students and teachers together (by mutual consent, whenever possible) for several years supports caring in two essential ways: it provides time for the development of caring relations, and it makes teaching themes of care more feasible. When trust has been established, teacher and students can discuss matters that would be hard for a group of strangers to approach, and classmates learn to support one another in sensitive situations.

The structural changes suggested here are not expensive—and I believe that they are easily made—but the curricular and pedagogical changes that are required may be more difficult. High school textbooks rarely contain the kinds of supplementary

*... our society has gone too far in compartmentalizing the care of its children. When we ask whose job it is to teach children how to care, an appropriate response is, "Everyone's."*

material I have described, and teachers are not formally prepared to incorporate such material. Too often, even the people we regard as strongly prepared in a liberal arts major are unprepared to discuss the history of their subject, its relation to other subjects, the biographies of its great figures, its connections to great existential questions, and the ethical responsibilities of those who work in that discipline. To teach themes of care in an academically effective way, teachers will have to engage in projects of self-education.

At present, neither liberal arts departments nor schools of education pay much attention to connecting academic subjects with themes of care. For example, biology students may learn something of the anatomy and physiology of mammals but nothing at all about the care of living animals; they may never be asked to consider the moral issues involved in the annual euthanasia of millions of pets. Mathematics students may learn to solve quadratic equations but never study what it means to live in a mathematicized world. In enlightened history classes, students may learn something about the problems of racism and colonialism but never hear anything about the evolution of childhood, the contributions of women in both domestic and public caregiving, or the connection between the feminization of caregiving and public policy. A liberal education that neglects matters that are central to a fully human life hardly warrants the name,<sup>6</sup> and a professional education that confines itself to technique does nothing to close the gaps in liberal education.

The greatest structural obstacle, however, may simply be legitimizing the inclusion of themes of care in the curriculum. Teachers in the early grades have

long included such themes as a regular part of their work, and middle school educators are becoming more sensitive to developmental needs involving care. But secondary schools—where violence, apathy, and alienation are most evident—do little to develop the capacity to care. Today, even elementary teachers complain that the pressure to produce high test scores inhibits the work they regard as central to their mission: the development of caring and competent people. Therefore, it would seem that the most fundamental change required is one of attitude. Teachers can be very special people in the lives of children, and it should be legitimate for them to spend time developing relations of trust, talking with students about problems that are central to their lives, and guiding them toward greater sensitivity and competence across all the domains of care. ❖

*Nel Noddings is the Lee Jacks Professor of Child Education at Stanford University and author of The Challenge to Care in Schools (Teachers College Press).*

#### NOTES

1. For the theoretical argument, see Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992); for a practical example and rich documentation, see Sharon Quint, *Schooling Homeless Children* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994).

2. Noddings, chap. 12.

3. See Thomas H. Naylor, William H. Willimon, and Magdalena R. Naylor, *The Search for Meaning* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994).

4. For many more examples, see Nel Noddings, *Educating for Intelligent Belief and Unbelief* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

5. See Jane Roland Martin, *The Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

6. See Bruce Wilshire, *The Moral Collapse of the University* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

# How Do We Care? Let Us Count the Ways

Dr. Bernice Lerner

WE teachers (ideally) care about our students, our respective subject areas, and managing our time well. More specifically, we care about that which affects our students: the particular milieus they must navigate and events that shape their lives. We care about how we can best help them learn and hone skills while we uphold high expectations and offer needed support. We try to transmit information that resonates; to develop rich curricula and lesson plans. We search for methods that suit our temperaments and those of our classes and that reflect good practice. Many of us care about our professional development, our career trajectory, attending to the various demands in our lives, and taking time to recharge. Rarely, however, do we stop to reflect on the ends to which all this caring is aimed. In Aristotelian terms, what is the “telos”—or ultimate goal—with which we are concerned?

Our work-related endeavors shape, in part, our destinies. Having chosen a noble profession, we have opportunities to regularly practice (and model) wisdom, justice, and compassion; in other words, *to lead good lives*. Must we not care about helping each of our students make strides toward this same overarching goal?

Lest such caring seem esoteric, listen to the voices of educators who work in an extreme setting—a public high school in Boston. In this school, eighty-five percent of the students qualify for free lunch under federal law. The students’ parents—a number of whom are single

mothers—struggle to earn a living; few earn more than \$24,000 a year. Many of the teens are exposed to crime, violence, and drug addiction. Some feel they live in a “war zone,” with school being their only haven. Some carry knives—which they hide around the school’s grounds—to protect themselves. Such students must be vigilant, know “the code,” never squeal, and know how to steal and manipulate to get what they need or want. They have low expectations of themselves and others and low self-esteem. Others fare well, are engaged in their classes, and work outside of school. Many own the standard fare of American teens—cell phones, iPods, and coordinating sneakers and clothes.

How do the educators of these students aim to help them *lead good lives*? In three ways: 1) By enabling them to discern right from wrong; 2) By fostering in them the desire to do what is good; and 3) By encouraging them to take responsibility.

Teachers cannot assume that their students know right from wrong. The most troubled of this public high school’s students bring a horrifying history with them to ninth grade. They have had difficulty in school settings for years and lack basic skills. One counselor notes that parents are “the whole key”—if they neglect to think about their children’s needs and do not consider education important, the teacher must care enough to impart fundamental lessons:

*Part of my job is . . . moral education.  
[Students] need to make their own deci-*

*sions. So [one must] teach them how to make the right decisions. I call [what I do] ‘milieu therapy.’ For example, something happens—there is a fight in the hallway and then the kids are all excited . . . it’s like watching a soap opera. So [I] process it with them, right then and there. The kids were watching one fight we had, so my job was to get them back into the classroom. I promised to tell them the whole story; all the details. [They] would say, ‘Oh, you should have let them fight, you should have done this, you should have done that.’ Sometimes what they are saying is ‘right’ is what would get them results that they want . . . that’s why they consider it right. But then, you flesh it out, asking, ‘How would that be if you were the other person?’ You don’t [tell them] the golden rule. You have to actually let them talk and you have to listen to them.*

This counselor describes how within certain groups’ mores it is expected that boys will sexually harass girls; that girls beat up boys; that fighting between girls is vicious. She explains that students lie to her because they fear they will otherwise get into trouble; that she has rewarded those who tell her the truth for an entire day by taking them to Twin Donut. She has found that when she treats students with kindness and respect, they respond accordingly, and that she must also be “incredibly strict.” She will not tolerate swearing in her presence. Her students must say “please” and “thank you” or they are asked to leave.



In order for students to lead a good life they must not only know right from wrong but also desire to do what is right. At the time of this writing columnists are discussing the behavior of Wesley Autrey, the man who leapt in front of a New York City subway train to save the life of a stranger who had fallen onto the tracks. Why the fascination with this courageous deed? I believe we need exemplars of human goodness to inspire us to want to act well. We need to be shown what is within the realm of human possibility.

A Career Pathways program at the Boston high school puts before students choices they would not otherwise be exposed to. Between menial jobs and roles dramatized on television are a host of positions in areas such as law and government and health care. Students who wish to contribute to society and live a solidly middle-class lifestyle indeed have realistic aspirations.

*No matter where or what we teach, the goal to which our efforts should be aimed is to help our students lead good lives.*

Beyond schoolwide initiatives, individual teachers try to foster in students the desire to do well. After 9/11 one teacher was disturbed that the majority of his students felt that the attack did not concern them—it touched no one in their neighborhoods. He cares that as students register his own appreciation of history and its lessons that some will want to expand their horizons. He tries to “work toward [students’] interests as much as [possible] given the nature of the curriculum,” and to give them the opportunity to discuss sex, drugs, jobs, and other topics about which they need honest information. Perhaps most importantly, he—and other of the school’s teachers—debunk myths. They tell students who are disinclined to participate in extracurricular activities or

to put effort into their schoolwork (because that’s “acting white”) that they are making a huge mistake. Minority teachers in particular serve as authentic role models.

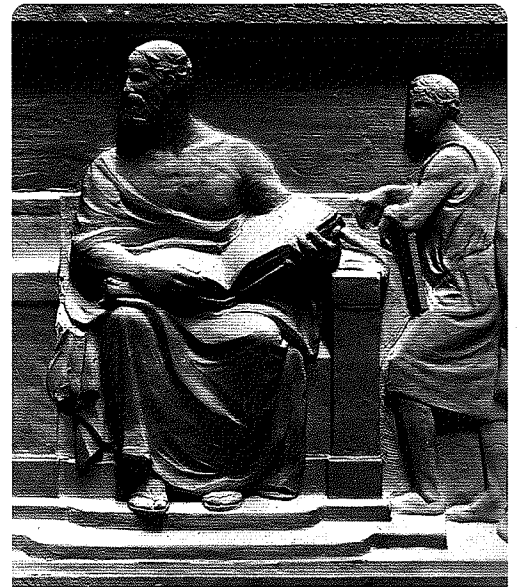
An English-as-a-second-language teacher fears for her students who are recent immigrants. Though integration is desirable, she does not want them to adopt the unseemly behavior typically seen in the school’s hallways. She has observed that those who come from countries to which they cannot return put great effort into their studies. She names and reinforces positive habits. She cares that her students desire the good.

It is not enough, of course, to know right from wrong and want to act well. In order to live a good life, one must take responsibility. In this urban high school it is not unusual for abusive and/or lawless parents to blame the system (e.g., unin-

teresting lessons) for their children’s lack of effort or suspensions, thereby perpetuating a cycle of apathy and self-destruction. When parents are satisfied with report cards full of Cs and Ds (as they had not done better themselves) teaching responsibility falls on school personnel.

One caring counselor gives concrete instructions. Sometimes this means making clear to students and their parents that teenagers must be provided with an alarm clock and breakfast and be in on weeknights at a reasonable hour; that there are expectations regarding handing in homework and consequences when a student breaches school rules.

Of course, there are many situations in which parents desire what is good for their children and students assume



responsibility. One special education teacher is proud of a boy whom she believes will lead a good life:

*Once somebody wants something and you give them the formula to get it, and they have the strength and the perseverance [to go for it], they can succeed. We have one boy who we think is going to be successful. He’s got low intelligence; tested almost borderline . . . his mother is low-intelligence and doesn’t understand the system. So here he is—low intelligence, no support, but he wants to own his own business at Fenway Park as a hotdog vendor. He’ll probably make it. The teachers say he’s such a nudge. He always gets what he wants—he goes after it.*

I would argue that the ways in which these Boston high school educators care apply to all school communities. No matter where or what we teach, the goal is to help our students lead good lives. Toward this end, we must care that they know right from wrong, desire what is noble, and exercise their will to act. ❖

Offered by

**The Center for the  
Advancement of  
Ethics and Character**

at

The School of Education  
at Boston University

**April 12 – 13, 2007**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Boston University  
School of Management  
595 Commonwealth Avenue  
4th Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts

**THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007**

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

**CARING:  
A COMPLEX VIRTUE**

*Plenary Session I*

**Dr. Bernice Lerner** directs the CAEC, teaches in BU's School of Education and College of Arts and Sciences, and is the author of *The Triumph of Wounded Souls* and co-editor of *Great Lives, Vital Lessons*.

10:30 a.m. – Noon

**THE ART OF LEARNING**

*Plenary Session II*

**Dr. Rosanna Warren** is an award-winning poet and has written or contributed to numerous poetry publications. She is a professor of English and modern foreign languages in BU's College of Arts and Sciences and is also a University Professor.

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

*Luncheon Speaker*

**Dr. James Tracy** is the headmaster of the Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, MA. He is the previous headmaster of BU Academy and has written or co-edited three books.

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**WHO CARES AND WHY?  
THEOLOGICAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON CARING**

*Panel Presentation*

*Panelists are members of Boston University's widely diverse community of chaplains and campus ministers.*

Reverend Robert Hill  
Reverend Sakena Young-Scaggs

Father Patrick Tishel  
Sister Olga Yaqob  
Rabbi Joseph Polak  
Reverend Joanne Engquist  
Mr. Dokuro Jaeckel

**FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2007**

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

**PLAGIARISM:  
A MATTER OF ETHICS  
AND CARING**

*Plenary Session I*

**Dr. Carol Jenkins** holds her doctorate degree from Boston College and is an associate professor of elementary education within BU's Curriculum and Teaching department.

10:30 a.m. – Noon

**TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:  
IMAGES OF CARING IN THE  
BUDDHIST TRADITIONS  
OF ASIA**

*Plenary Session II*

**Dr. M. David Eckel** is Associate Professor of Religion at BU and received his doctorate from Harvard University. His expertise is in Asian religions, with particular focus on varieties of Buddhism.

FROM THE TRENCHES

# Caring in Education

By Susie Carlisle

AS I'm an academic dean, my phone rings more frequently during the final weeks and days of the fall term. In fact, it's the time of year when the opening lines of Yeats's "The Second Coming" haunt me: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre/The falcon cannot hear the falconer;/Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Students are nervous to the point of visceral reaction in anticipation of final exams, papers, and projects; teachers are overwhelmed with grading and comment writing; parents are making frantic phone calls about the phone calls and e-mails

they are receiving from their sons and daughters who may be dangerously close to the proverbial edge. And yet, it is also a time of reconciliation and celebration and a firm reminder of why we, as educators, do what we do.

We all know that caring happens at every level of interaction with our students and with each other. It is particularly concentrated in a boarding school setting—we are teachers, dorm parents, coaches, advisors, deans—where our roles are intricately woven together. We have a unique opportunity to challenge each other to

respect, understand, and care in myriad ways.

In these increasingly demanding and often confusing times for teenagers, we need to consciously remind them (and ourselves) of the importance of their presence in their family circle, in our school community, and in the world. I fear that too often we get caught up in the monotonous, day-to-day routine of adjusting schedules and crunching numbers and we forget about being "human." We need to remember that a kind word—or time spent over a cup of coffee or bowl of ice cream—can go a long way.



Noon – 1:00 p.m.

*Luncheon Speaker*

**Elizabeth Lynch**, a math teacher at Boston College High School, formerly served as a volunteer teacher on Chicago's west side.

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

## ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING: THE DIFFICULTY OF BALANCING THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Plenary Session III*

**Dr. Nicholas Washienko's** expertise is in continuing education for professionals and business presentations. He received his doctorate from BU and currently teaches in the Special Programs department.

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

## LESSONS AND REFLECTIONS

**Dr. Bernice Lerner**

**Ms. Lauren K. Terry** is the external relations coordinator at the CAEC and is pursuing her master's degree in Art History at BU.

### Spring Institute

#### REGISTRATION FORM

Fee: \$390; \$350 for three or more teachers from one school/organization.

Fee includes continental breakfast, lunch, and materials. Fee also includes a \$40 nonrefundable processing charge.

Name(s) and position(s) of participant(s) (indicate contact person with an asterisk)

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

School/District \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### Two-day Spring Institute fee

\$390 each;  
(\$350 for three  
or more teachers): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x Number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check/s enclosed  
(make payable to  
CAEC at Boston University)

Payment type (check one)

Visa  MasterCard  Discover

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize Boston University to charge my credit card the amount specified above. I agree to pay the total credit card amount listed above according to the card issuer agreement.

Authorized signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Registration deadline:

**April 6, 2007**

Please return this form to:  
CAEC at Boston University  
621 Commonwealth Avenue  
4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02215

Or fax it to 617.353.4351

For more information, please contact us at 617.353.3262 or [caec@bu.edu](mailto:caec@bu.edu)

Directions to Boston University facilities, a list of area hotels, and parking information will be mailed to all registrants.

*The CAEC's Spring Institute is a stimulating retreat that cultivates the intellectual lives of educators, inspires them to embrace a renewed sense of responsibility and dedication to the art of teaching, and instills in them a deeper understanding of how to educate for character. Plenary presentations by Boston University scholars explain relevant philosophical principles and demonstrate how sources of wisdom can be mined for enduring lessons.*

Don't misunderstand me; we must maintain high expectations for all of our students, from being on time for commitments to meeting and exceeding the standards and goals we have set for them and that they have set for themselves. The moment we stop doing this is, I think, the tipping point for when we truly do stop caring. Indeed, asking our students to push their comfortable limits and make connections between seemingly disparate ideas is constant reinforcement of our respect for them as individuals, and evidence that we do care—deeply—about their character, growth, and unique talents.

I make tea for students in study hall who have colds coming on and the couch in my office offers a respite from the world of papers, grades and lost basketball games, but I also try to demonstrate the depth of my caring in ways that are less apparent. I think it is essential that we

infuse our every action with care and respect.

In addition to my position as academic dean, I teach a senior English seminar. The overarching theme of the fall term was Joseph Campbell's notion of the "hero journey." The final novel in my section was Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*—a challenging piece of literature at the college level, where I last taught it. With three weeks to go in the term, however, I found myself introducing it to exhausted seniors who were barely recovering from submitting college applications. They struggled as they went through the day with Clarissa, from buying "the flowers herself" to sitting with Peter Walsh on the bench in Regents Park, watching Septimus Smith fall to his death, and—finally—going to Clarissa's party and experiencing all the terror, ecstasy, and extraordinary excitement that accompanies the seemingly mundane.

As we read, we also watched *The Hours*, a film that draws on *Mrs. Dalloway's* themes to intertwine and juxtapose the lives of three women. It helped my students visualize characters and understand the nuances of Woolf's style but only rarely in our class conversations did we directly question whether Clarissa (or any of the other characters) was heroic. After all, what could possibly be heroic about buying flowers and mending a dress in anticipation of a party?

As it turns out, plenty. Some of my colleagues thought I was perhaps asking too much of these seniors (Virginia Woolf? *Mrs. Dalloway?*). But, on the other hand, why not ask them to go beyond their own expectations? Why not respect that they might indeed find a way into a text that is meaningful and potent? I did, and as a result, my students were able to articulate that Clarissa's struggle to

*Continued on page 14*

# Caring: At the Heart of an Educator's Role

By Kristen Fink

**A**LTHOUGH I have been out of junior high and high school classrooms for almost a dozen years, I found myself sharpening pencils and buying notebooks for no particular reason this past September. The poignancy of the season was particularly heightened for me as both of my daughters had decided to make life-changing career moves and become teachers. I began sifting through dozens of teaching resources, articles, lesson plans, and curricula, hoping to extract for them what had mattered most from my thirty-three years of education experience (and knowing full well that they had to discover it for themselves).

When I arrived for my first day of work in my junior high classroom at the tender age of 21, I was ill-prepared for what it meant to be a teacher.

I remember going home physically exhausted my entire first year of teaching. I eventually had an epiphany: teaching was not about lesson plans or bulletin boards; it was about the quality of my character and the moral ethos of my classroom. What mattered were the caring relationships and sense of community that my students and I were experiencing.

As the days unfolded, I slowly realized that caring was so integral to the work that no other goal could be accomplished until those trusting relationships existed. Indeed, my students' development—their sense of safety and community—depended on the climate we established together. As I learned to work effectively with parents, I also recognized their critical role in shaping their children's character. I learned, too, that I needed to involve my students in a variety of activities with the greater community. Learning to teach became, for me, a series of epiphanies.

Gordon Vessels, an Atlanta psychologist and outstanding character educator, said:

*The moral growth of children . . . occurs when adults strive to be the type of people that children need for them to be, when children have many sustained relationships with socially responsible adults, and when children are provided with a network of supportive relationships or community.*

I was discovering that my students needed clear examples of the kinds of people they might aspire to become. I discovered that children want caring adults to help guide them, teach them how to negotiate life's challenges, and help them discover their own unique potential and purpose. A few years ago, I came across a Father's Day card that reminded me of this that said: "Dad, you tried to teach me patience . . . I constantly tried yours. You set limits. . . I pushed you to yours. You made the rules. . . I made every effort to break them." The inside of the card read: "Are we a great team or what?"

I found myself exploring biography in a variety of ways in both my theatre and English classes, asking students to comb through stories and distill great individuals' most outstanding accomplishments and contributions and the core values they embodied that supported their contributions. When I taught Shakespeare I discovered that my students wanted to discuss his insights into moral character and how they shaped lives. I remember one performance in which my 9th-grade acting company staged a dramatic presentation for our yearly awards ceremony intended to celebrate the importance of striving for excellence and accomplishment. Their presentation consisted of meaningful quotations from among hun-

dreds they had sifted through, in the form of a choral reading set to music.

My 1957 New Jersey kindergarten report card, which I found a few years ago in a tucked-away box, included not only "Growth in Skills and Information," but categories such as "Growth in Habits of Work" and "Growth in Habits of Living with Others." Indicators such as "refrains from laughing at others' mistakes," "works independently," and "takes turns cheerfully" also reveal that we have long known that the development of good character is essential to one's positive human development. Character development is an age-old goal of education, identified as core across all times and cultures.

Albert Einstein said, "The most important human endeavor is striving for morality." It is hopeful to know that character education is currently embedded in virtually every state's learning standards. Most have woven it into their core curricula, considering attitudes, dispositions, and "character principles" integral to subjects and learning. The important point is that when broad groups of people get together to talk about what is critical for students to know, be able to do, and "be like" (to use a term by Ivor Pritchard, senior researcher at the U.S. Department of Education), character development is very likely to be part of the conversation. Research is converging today to suggest that a comprehensive, high-quality character education initiative may not only help students' overall positive development but may also be a highly effective approach in preventing a variety of negative behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, bullying, school failure, and teen pregnancy. (Go to [www.character.org](http://www.character.org) to see the Character Education Partnership's position paper by Dr. Victor Battistich on



“Character Education, Prevention, and Positive Youth Development.”)

This idea of caring and character development has even greater reach—it includes schools caring about and nurturing their civic mission. Last fall I attended a U.S. Department of Education conference at which Lee Hamilton, the Co-Chair of the 9-11 Commission, gave a presentation; the topic of the conference was “What Do We Owe Our Children?” As Mr. Hamilton explored that topic, he said we owe our children three things: first, we owe them safe schools—the horrific school shootings we have experienced speak volumes about how right he is; second, we owe them civic education, so that they will understand our nation’s principles, values, and ideals; and third, we owe them character education, so that they can become the best people they can possibly

become and contribute to their communities, their nation, and their world.

Here, then, is another kind of caring. Our country’s founders realized that the health and future of the nation depended on cultivating citizens committed to service and the common good. Public schools were to be charged with fostering an understanding in our children of our nation’s important civic mission and democratic vision.

So, as I revisited my own teaching career and tried to convey to my daughters what matters most as they begin their own teaching journeys, it came down to this: Tracy and Brittany, you are engaged in the world’s most important work—work that is about passing on the best of civilization and inspiring young people to discover meaning and purpose. Think deeply about your roles as teachers and about the personal qualities and caring

you bring to the classroom. Diligently plan for how you will develop caring relationships and a sense of community in your classrooms—how you will make certain that every single student feels that his or her worth and dignity is valued and affirmed. Include in your array of best practices effective strategies for weaving character development across your curriculum—perhaps by highlighting values in your daily lessons or planning service-learning activities to give students opportunities for civic engagement. Perhaps most important, involve students in setting up a caring classroom rooted in excellence, respect, and responsibility. ❖

*Kristen Fink has been a classroom teacher and a state specialist for character education and service learning. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Utah Coalition for Civic, Character, and Service Learning.*

**QUOTES, BOOKS, and MOVIES**

**QUOTES ON CARING**

“One must care about a world one will never see.”  
—BERTRAND RUSSELL

“Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.”  
—ANTHONY D’ANGELO

“I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance.”  
—PABLO CASALS

“Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge.”  
—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

“Care provides a conduit for our spirit’s expression in the midst of our social existence. The more we truly care, the more we’ll come to know ourselves and others.”  
—DOC CHILDRE & HOWARD MARTIN

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”  
—LEO BUSCAGLIA

“The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government.”  
—THOMAS JEFFERSON

**BOOKS ON CARING**

- For Kids:**
- Caring, Sharing, and Getting Along: 50 Perfect Poems for Promoting Good Behavior in the Classroom*  
BETSY FRANCO
  - Caring (Way to Be!)*  
MARY SMALL
  - When I Care About Others (The Way I Feel)*  
CORNELIA MAUDE

- For Adults:**
- Educating for a Caring Society: Classroom Relationships and Moral Action*  
D. KAY JOHNSTON
  - Caring Enough to Lead: How Reflective Thought Leads to Moral Leadership*  
LEONARD O. PELLICER
  - Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children’s Environments That Work*  
LELLA GANDINI AND JIM GREENMAN
  - Critical Lessons: What Our Schools Should Teach*  
NEL NODDINGS

**MOVIES ON CARING**

- Anna and the King* (20th Century Fox, 2000)
- Gandhi* (Sony Pictures, 2001)
- Guarding Tess* (Sony Pictures, 1998)
- Iris* (Miramax, 2002)
- Live and Become* (Menemsha Films, 2005)
- Not One Less* (Sony Pictures, 2000)
- The Best Years of Our Lives* (MGM, 1946)

# Disturbing Behavior in the Classroom: A Caring Perspective

By Dr. Ed Orszulak

“If we fail to teach difficult children, and entrust their enculturation elsewhere, we must first realize . . . there is no elsewhere.”—John Goodlad

LET’S face it, students who exhibit disturbing behavior are difficult to teach. Generally, our response system reflects a pattern of apprehension (we catch them doing something wrong) and prosecution (we deliver a consequence . . . some form of punishment).

That’s it. Typically, we find ourselves confronted by the same or similar behavior and deliver the same response. For most students, once or twice through the system is enough; they eventually choose more appropriate behaviors and life goes on happily. But for a small population of kids—the habitual offenders—the cycle can soon spin out of control. This may lead to a fractured teacher/student relationship characterized by anger, frustration, disappointment, and despair; a situation hardly conducive to caring. There may be a better way to reach difficult students. Consider three important “elements” of the behavioral change process: responsibility, recovery, and redemption.

**Responsibility:** When putting the situation under a microscope, we may ask ourselves: Are we somehow contributing to the problem? No, we are not. The student clearly needs to be held accountable for disturbing behavior; apprehension and prosecution take care of that. Our responsibility is to *change* the behavior. Apprehension and prosecution may work for most kids, but not for our repeat offender.

*...with consistent practice, our response patterns to disturbing behavior will develop into more effective, positive, and sustained efforts that renew the classroom covenant of expectations, responsibilities, and requirements.*

**Recovery:** We should not assume the habitual offender understands how to recover. Recovery involves the recognition of deviation from personal responsibilities as well as of the steps (and opportunities) to get back on track; this takes instruction. Just like the student who believes one plus one equals three requires instructional patience, the student who believes two, three, four . . . ten wrongs make a right will require instructional patience to learn more appropriate behavior. Thus, our instruction should reflect an effort to stop the behavior, as well as to increase the probability that the behavior will not occur again. This brings us to the “element” most often ignored when dealing with a student exhibiting disturbing behavior: redemption.

**Redemption:** This element—often ignored in the face of challenge, disrespect, and defiance—provides solutions and multiple pathways to appropriate choice; reaffirms the belief that the individual is capable of social achievement; delivers instruction about expectations, responsibilities, and requirements for positive change; and restores the covenant between the individual and other members of the classroom community to adhere to standards of ethics, morality, and honesty.

Our help (and consistent demonstration of caring) is in evidence when we

develop clarity in purpose and practice; learn to listen deeply with empathy to others in the spirit of dialogue; acquire the ability to stay focused on possibilities rather than fall prey to resignation and dependency on ineffective (yet expedient) processes; generate multiple pathways to achieving goals; and model and practice effective techniques to inspire positive change.

This help is offered and delivered *with* and *for* the student, not *to* the student. A word of caution: This effort—this ability to care—can be very difficult to muster when we are exposed to the dissonant, contradictory, or even dismissive perspectives of the child exhibiting disturbing behavior. However, with consistent practice, our response patterns to disturbing behavior will develop into more effective, positive, and sustained efforts that renew the classroom covenant of expectations, responsibilities, and requirements. This redemptive perspective will have a positive influence on our sometimes delicate and strained relationship with the repeat offender in the classroom. ❖

*Dr. Ed Orszulak is a school administrator and educational consultant with more than twenty-five years of experience working with students who exhibit disturbing behaviors. Ed and his wife live in Connecticut with their two daughters.*

# Modeling the Virtue of Caring

By Joni Pelta

CARING is one of those words that seems easy to define until it's necessary to do just that. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary tells us that care is:

1 a : to feel trouble or anxiety b : to feel interest or concern *care about freedom*  
 2 : to give care *care for the sick*  
 3 a : to have a liking, fondness or taste *I don't care for your attitude* b : to have an inclination *would you care for some pie?*

#### TRANSITIVE VERB

1 : to be concerned about or to the extent of *don't care what they say*  
 2 : Wish *if you care to go*

For the purpose of discussing the ethic of caring, let's look at these definitions and identify which are most appropriate. "To feel an interest or concern" and "to be concerned about or to the extent of" seem the most applicable.

In today's world, what are people interested in and concerned about?

Listen to the morning and evening radio talk shows and flip through your TV channels during the day; the media highlights attractive celebrities such as actors, actresses, singers, and athletes. People care about what is going on in the personal lives of popular figures such as Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes, Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, and Angelina Jolie.

Take a look at magazines such as *Us* and *People*. Wonder why should you or I care how pop singer Britney Spears spends her time, how many kids she has, and about her relationship with her husband?

Flip through the VH-1 and MTV channels on basic cable. MTV has a show

called "Cribs" that features celebrities giving tours of their over-the-top homes. These homes usually feature swimming pools, many pricey cars, extravagant media rooms, and top-of-the-line kitchens in which probably no one ever cooks. I have never seen any books displayed in these celebrity homes.

Continue to be a voyeur into the private lives of the rich and famous on VH-1's series "The Fabulous Life of..." A celebrity such as Cameron Diaz will be featured in segments that revolve around her many homes, how much she spends on her hair, and her fancy cars. Another episode of the show features billionaires and how they compete to see who can build the biggest, most opulent yachts.

Celebrity magazines and TV shows discuss physical attributes. Perhaps we could combine one star's eyes, another's rear, a third's hair, and a fourth's legs for the perfect body. If we grow tired of fantasizing about this, we can hire a plastic surgeon to mold our own features into our ideal.

Does our media's fixation on celebrities and appearance have anything to do with the ethic of caring we want to pass on to our children? Do we want our children to care only about the activities of the "beautiful people"? Do we want our children to feel that they don't measure up to the airbrushed, made up, surgically enhanced bodies of models? Do we want them to resort to painful, expensive plastic surgery in an endless quest for youth and beauty or to—in other ways—be consumed with the superficial?

Perhaps, you counter, there are noble celebrities, such as Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt (*People* magazine's "Most beauti-

ful couple in the world"), who engage in charitable endeavors, or Oprah Winfrey, who poured \$40 million into building a school for girls in Africa. I would argue that too few of our celebrities are devoted to worthy causes.

If we want to pass on the ethic of caring about something besides celebrities and outward appearance to our children, how do we do it?

Children learn what they see their parents do, not just what their parents talk about. If you want your child to care, you have to care.

What are your special talents? I like to cook and frequently do so for people who are ill, bereaved, have newborns, or need some help. My husband is a talented piano player and often plays at benefits and synagogue events.

Another way to model caring for your children is to pick a favorite charity to support as a family. For years my family supported Lekotek, a computer and toy play place for kids with special needs. My older son would volunteer at the Lekotek camps to help special needs children with computer games. As a family, we would run in Lekotek's annual fund raiser and vigorously bid on interesting items at their silent auction.

You can also model caring by participating in PTA activities at your children's schools. My husband works long hours at his job, but always makes time to attend the annual school curriculum nights. I have chaired the same committee at my sixteen-year-old son's schools since he was in elementary school. Among the benefits of helping at your children's schools are getting to know the staff and teachers in an informal way (as opposed to calling

upon them to support your children during a crisis) and having your children know that you are actively supporting their education. What could be better than that?

Maybe you work full time to put food on your family's table and feel you don't have the time or energy to volunteer in the community; this does not mean you don't care and can't be a good role model for your children. Try stocking up on an assortment of greeting cards to keep at home; sending cards to friends and relatives on their special occasions will make them feel great. Hear about a friend or relative who is ill or has suffered a death in the family? Send a card. It's amazing how few people bother to do this anymore!

Another way of showing your children that you care is by rewarding their teachers. Some parents complain that teachers are overpaid and don't do enough. Have these parents spent an hour in their children's classroom? Try that and you will be wondering "How do teachers do this all day?!"

I feel that teachers are greatly underpaid and underappreciated. Most of my sons' teachers have been amazing. How do I show teachers that I appreciate them? I listen to them and respect what they have to say. If they ask for classroom supplies (be aware most teachers spend their own money to supplement the meager amount for supplies their districts provide), I promptly send them in and even send in some extra to make up for those parents who don't bother.

Give teachers small gifts for the winter holidays and at the year's end; nothing lavish or expensive is necessary. You can give each teacher—male or female—an individually wrapped, long-stemmed rose or bake them some brownies. Other gifts I've given include small gift certificates, coffee mugs, nice pens, stationery, bath products, wallets, and silk flowers.

Another way for both parents and teachers to show caring in school settings is to include *everybody*. My younger son,

Mike, is a friendly teen with special needs. Last fall, when he was a sophomore, Mike phoned a "regular ed" senior girl he knew at school; he asked her to the homecoming dance and she accepted! She explained to me that since she didn't have a steady boyfriend she felt that it would be fun to attend the dance with Mike. For her to include and accept Mike meant a lot to him; most high school girls would not have had the courage to attend a dance with a special needs classmate.

On the other hand, caring is not always motivated by the right reasons—please don't volunteer to help my son in sports or other programs for kids with special needs if this is only to build your résumé. Mike was once ignored at a party by a girl who had helped him every week at a sports program.

It is surprising how often students with special needs get forgotten at school. The last two years of orientation at Mike's high school, the sixty students in his special program felt left out; all the other students' names were posted on the wall with their home rooms listed. What a terrible feeling it was for Mike and me to go through that list his freshman year and not see his name and home room included on that list!

Another parent and I advocated on behalf of the special needs students, and the school corrected this oversight for Mike's junior year of orientation; the special needs students' names and home rooms were posted on the list. We felt included!

My last example involves a fund raiser for the junior class at Mike's school. I did not realize that his class was selling gift wrap to fund their prom until I saw the sales literature in the school office. I ordered a lot of gift wrap and also e-mailed the teacher coordinating the project to tell her she was missing lots of potential revenue by not including the juniors in Mike's program. The school staff quickly amended the error.

When we die, no one is going to cite our financial net worth at our funeral as

an indication of our success in life. Caring about others, our families, and the world around us builds strong relationships—the ultimate measure of our success in the world. Taking the time to teach our children the ethic of caring is much more important than letting our celebrity-obsessed media dominate our children's thoughts. ❖

*Joni Pelta is an at-home mother, runs the special needs committee at her son's high school, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Maryland.*

---

### Caring in Education

*From page 9*

discover her true self is the greatest quest of all, that Clarissa was heroic in turning her journey inward to face her past, and finally, that in confronting death, Clarissa begins to appreciate and understand "the adventure of being alive." While we certainly did not dive as deeply into the text as I would have liked, my class emerged from this experience realizing that their own lives—their days, their hours, their moments—are as heroic as a literary representation. There is something to be said for caring enough to ask them to go beyond what they perceive as their limitations and discover something that is beautiful, real, and illuminating.

And so the term ends. The students leave and the faculty spend two days sharing concerns about—and celebrating milestones of—our charges. Some will receive letters of commendation; others will receive letters alerting them that they are going to be placed on academic probation. No matter what is communicated, each conversation is characterized by care and thoughtful reflection.

Because the falcon does hear the falconer, things don't fall apart. And because we care, the center holds. ❖

*Susie Carlisle is the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs at Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, Massachusetts.*



**TO OUR READERS**

***We want to hear from you!***

The strength of this newsletter depends on your active participation. Our readers want to learn what is happening in your school or community—that’s what our “From the Trenches” section is all about.

We welcome submissions of any kind, including letters, articles, and anecdotes. What has worked in your classroom, home, or school? What has inspired your dedication to character education? We also encourage recommendations for our Selected Bibliography, Movies, and Character Quotes.

**Our next issue will spotlight “JUSTICE.”**

**The deadline for submissions is May 25, 2007.**

Please address all correspondence to:  
 Newsletter Managing Editor  
 Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character  
 621 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

**Please use this form to initiate, renew, or update your membership.**

<b>Friend of the CAEC* (\$60):</b> <i>Biannual newsletter, occasional mailings.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEW membership</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Renewal</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Additional Contributions</b> \$ _____
<b>ASCD Character Education Network (\$20):</b> <i>Biannual newsletter, occasional mailings.</i>  <i>Please make checks payable to CAEC at Boston University.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEW membership</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Renewal</i>	<b>*NOTE:</b> \$40 of each Friend of the CAEC membership is tax deductible. We are a nonprofit organization and rely on grants and the generosity of our members. Any additional tax-deductible contribution you make to the CAEC is both needed and greatly appreciated.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address  work  home \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation, Title, or Position \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone  work  home \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Visit our website! [www.bu.edu/education/caec](http://www.bu.edu/education/caec)**



**Center for the Advancement  
of Ethics and Character**  
Boston University  
621 Commonwealth Avenue, 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02215

33-110-914-1383-9

[www.bu.edu/education/caec](http://www.bu.edu/education/caec)

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON MA  
PERMIT NO. 1839

### UPCOMING 2007 EVENTS IN CHARACTER EDUCATION

#### **FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 3**

##### **Denver, CO**

NAIS 2007 Annual Conference:  
People, Planet, and Purpose

Contact:

National Association of  
Independent Schools

202-973-9700

[www.nais.org](http://www.nais.org)

On March 3 Dr. Bernice Lerner  
and Dr. Karen Newman will  
present "Building Character in  
the Independent School."

#### **MARCH 17–19**

##### **Anaheim, CA**

ASCD 2007 Annual Conference  
and Exhibit Show: Valuing the  
Whole Child

Contact:

Association for Supervision  
and Curriculum Development

800-933-2723

[www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)

#### **APRIL 12–13**

##### **Boston, MA**

CAEC Spring Institute:  
The Ethic of Caring

Contact:

Center for the Advancement  
of Ethics and Character

617-353-3262

[www.bu.edu/education/caec](http://www.bu.edu/education/caec)

#### **NOVEMBER 15–17**

##### **New York, NY**

AME 33rd Annual Conference:  
Civic Education, Moral  
Education, and Democracy in  
a Global Society

Contact:

Association for Moral  
Education

[www.amenetwork.org](http://www.amenetwork.org)