



Inside this issue

2

"Mom, Dad, I Feel Sad"

By Mr. Francis Lee

Chaps Corn

By Fr. Jp Menchavez

3

VOM Guide for Parents

Activities for Parents

Sept 6 (Thu)

GS Grade 1 Parents Forum 1
HS Grade 10 Parents Forum 1

Sept 13 (Thu)

GS Grade 5 Parents Forum 1

Sept 15 (Sat)

New Parents Education
Program Module 3

Sept 27 (Thu)

GS Grade 4 Parents Forum 1
HS Grade 12 Parents Forum 1

Sept 29 (Sat)

HS Grade 11 Parents Forum 1



CREATING A CULTURE OF KINDNESS AND COMPASSION IN SCHOOL

By Michelle Lichaucou-Tambunting Ed.M.
Harvard University Graduate School of Education
Co-Founder & Directress, Young Creative Minds School



Victor and Michelle with their sons Paco and Luis

When I look back at the most trying times of my life - my parents' separation, the death of my father in high school and my mother eight years ago, apart from the grief and the wave of sadness it brings me, the overriding memory that always comes with reminiscing is the kindness people extended to me and the rest of my family... people going out of their way to extend that kind word or gesture.

Much research has been done recently on the importance of Resilience and Grit in the lives of children and adults. More and more, we are realizing that high test scores and academic achievement are not enough. I am a firm believer that being able to recover from difficulties and rise from hardship to find a stronger you is far more important than grades or honors.

"Be kind. It's all connected."

In our constant quest as parents to raise our boys to be strong and resilient in the face of the challenges life brings, we sometimes fail to see the value of relationships in building resilience. I read somewhere once that "one of the qualities that differentiates people with higher quality relationships is their ability to be compassionate, empathetic and kind."

What does being Kind and Compassionate have to do with Resilience, one might ask? Our idea of Resilience could very well be associated with toughness, courage, independence- all the qualities we, as parents, may be prioritizing as we raise boys and young men. I grew up with three older brothers in a very traditional "you need to be tough" kind of way. I now once again live in a home with three boys - my husband and my two sons, but the values have changed. Our youngest son has autism so living with his condition has, in a way, "blessed" our outlook about raising our boys. Early on, we realized the importance of empathy in order to understand where our son was coming from. Being able to understand his world and why he chose to stay in it because of the sensory overload and chaos our world may sometimes bring, taught us to get out of ourselves and walk in his shoes. Only then were we truly able to understand, accept and love everything about autism and our son Luis. It becomes clear to us daily, how it parallels the way we should live our lives.

Continued on Page 3

"MOM, DAD, I FEEL SAD."

By Francis Andro Lee, MA, RGC

Kindness among co-parents

Dear Parents,

Our monthly bulletin focuses on the virtue of kindness, an ever-relevant theme. Michelle Tambunting's piece which connected it with grit and resilience was very interesting, while Francis Lee discussed dealing with your kids' feelings.

"Kindness is not a mushy niceness or a wimpy brand of charity. It is an attribute of God. His kindness calls forth our repentance (Rom 2:3-4). In addition, kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). This means that kindness should characterize our lives in Christ. Any failures or shortcomings in this area are not of God and must be cast aside. St. Paul exhorts us to focus on what is excellent, true, pure, and honorable (Phil 4:8). In chapter 13 of his First Letter to the Corinthians, he goes to great lengths in explaining a "more excellent way" (1 Cor 12:31), the way of charity. In verses 1-3, he sets the stage by emphasizing the absolute necessity of charity, or love. Then, in verses 4-7, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he defines charity. He begins: "Love is patient and kind...." The more excellent way that we are to focus on is fundamentally patient and kind. Kindness is nothing other than loving our neighbors as ourselves — putting others in our place. "This world" has no use for such nonsense. After all, "nice guys finish last." But if we allow Christ, who judges hearts, not appearances (cf. Is 11:3) to transform our perspective, we are able to escape our small, selfish worldviews. He allows us to see and reverence — often in very subtle ways — the God-given dignity of our neighbor. The "will of God" is to draw all people to Himself (cf. 1 Tm 2:4; 2 Pt 3:9). If that's so, we truly need to be instruments of God's unrelenting kindness."

"The kind person is obliging, meaning

Children nowadays are very vocal about how they feel. In some cases, parents would hear their children say, "Mom, I feel sad," or "Mom, I think I'm depressed." These words can make a parent be silent, or be placed in a situation where s/he would not know what to do. Some would probe, while others would say, "Ah! Don't worry, the feeling will go away." These are normal reactions from parents, however, knowing the generation of young people now, they are very sensitive with the words they hear from other people, especially adults. At times, it leads to more psychological concerns.

Depression and Anxiety are conditions we should not fear. There are a lot of stigmas about these psychological conditions. However, this is a reality we all have to face. Depression is a state where one feels helpless; while anxiety is a feeling of constant fear about something a person does not understand. These two are often misunderstood, as for many, they normally happen, and yes, at one point, they go away.

There are states wherein one experiences such, but copes well, but there are situations where one can be

that he or she anticipates others' needs. The kind person is also courteous, in that the respect he or she has for the other person is manifested in his or her conduct — everything from a polite greeting or acknowledgment of another's good deed to being punctual and thoughtful. Kindness also breeds cheerfulness or affability, as St. Thomas Aquinas affirms. This is actually a demand of justice to help others on their way to heaven and not allow our disposition to be a stumbling block for them. The kind person is also forgiving, patient, courageous (able to cope peaceably with difficulties and offer them as sacrifices), and agreeable, among other things. Kindness enables us to avoid rash judgments, gossip, and brooding over injuries. We give others the benefit of the doubt and preserve their good names (cf. Catechism, nos.

left in a state where professional help should be given. In the article Michelle wrote, she mentioned the importance of being a proactive parent, thus being aware of our children's feelings and emotions would be necessary.

In my experience as counselor, I realized a couple of things parents can do in dealing with such situations:

- Do not be scared to hear the words of your child regarding how s/he feels. Ask your child about it.
- Tell your child that that it is okay not to feel okay.
- Do not say that "Don't worry, it will go away."
- Acknowledge how your child is feeling.
- Do not solve your child's problem. Guide your child instead.
- You may ask, "How do you want me to help you with your problem?"
- Do not compare your experiences with your child's experiences.
- Seek for professional help if the situation is beyond your control. ■

2477-79)." (<https://catholicexchange.com/the-power-of-kindness>)

In the same way that Pope Francis has been so emphatic about it, I appeal to our parents to treat each other with kindness, to shun gossip and rash judgments at all costs among yourselves. Issues are resolved in a straightforward manner, personal (and not via viber groups) and through the proper channels. In such issues, at times, we don't get what we expect, or we don't see things from the same perspective, and we respect other people's point of view and decisions. In questions that are matters of opinion, we vote and we adhere to the majority's voice without grudges, and doing away with side-comments.

Continued on page 4

Culture of Kindness
from page 1

Our older son, Paco, spent a week of his summer volunteering at his brother's school. He worked in the Kindergarten class with neurotypical and children with special needs. It was important for us to grow empathy in him not just for his brother but for other children who are "different" in his eyes. It is easier to have empathy for a family member but harder for a stranger. We closed our eyes and bit the bullet on choosing to have him volunteer instead of spending his last week doing more basketball training or academic preparations for 6th grade. Adolescence is knocking on his door so we know that many feelings and emotions will set in this year. It was important for us to help him put his heart in the right place when things start to get tough for him. I pray he learned many life lessons about empathy and kindness working with children in that classroom. I pray that when life gets tough for him one day, he can look back at the experience and get out of himself and choose to be kind to others, because Kindness is healing too. Many times, when we are going through a rough spot, it is healthy to get out of our heads and take the focus out of ourselves and reach out to someone also in need.

In their piece *Resilience: Compassion and Empathy*, Mills and Dombek write "to be compassionate means to be aware of and sympathetic to the suffering of others. To be empathetic means to be able to notice the subtle verbal and non-verbal signals people give off that let you know what they need or want. People who do not have the ability to recognize these subtle cues are at a great social disadvantage in terms of the way they communicate with others. On the other hand, people who are empathetic receive both physical and emotional benefits from their sensitivity. Compassionate, empathetic people are able to really listen to and understand the experiences that other people describe. Their willingness to put their own concerns away for a while and to really witness and experience others' experiences is universally appreciated as a genuine and precious gift which decreases loneliness, bonds people together (creating stronger, deeper relationships), and enhances self-esteem and self-worth for both relationship partners."

Continued on Page 4

FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR DADS

Sept 1 (Sat)	Doctrine Class for Dads
Sept 2 (Sun)	Recollection at Southridge (English)
Sept 8 (Sat)	Doctrine Class for Dads
Sept 10-12 (Mon-Wed)	Closed Retreat at Makiling West Wing
Sept 15 (Sat)	Doctrine Class for Dads
Sept 20 (Thu)	Catechism class at Fully-Booked, BGC Recollection at Molave Center
Sept 22 (Sat)	Doctrine Class for Dads
Sept 23 (Sun)	Recollection at Southridge (Tagalog)
Sept 24-26 (Mon-Wed)	Closed Retreat at Makiling Main
Sept 27 (Thu)	Recollection at Sangandaan Center, Makati City Recollection at Fully Booked, U-View, High Street BGC

There is spiritual direction with the school chaplain by appointment.

**HELP YOUR SONS LIVE
THE VIRTUE OF
RESPONSIBILITY**

- **Don't do things that your son can do for themselves**
- **Be clear with your expectations. Make sure that they understand household rules.**
- **Tell them not only what has to be done but also how to do it. Give positive and specific feedback when they do things well.**
- **Create a home that will make them act responsibly. Give them specific study area far from distractions. Display a list of chores they have to accomplish.**
- **Correct them when they commit mistakes. Make them see what they could learn from their mistakes.**
- **Make them experience the natural consequences of their actions for them to learn to be responsible for their behavior.**
- **Be a positive role model. Speak positively about your work and chores. Admit your mistakes and show them how you will correct them.**

Kindness from co-parents from page 2

We try to be good co-parents to all in the batch, and not just to a few. The Holy Father has been inviting us to go to the peripheries, perhaps it is high time that we also make an effort to show kindness and reach out to our co-parents who are different from us, "wounded", unreasonably passive, and isolated? ■

In Christ,
Rev Fr Johnpaul Menchavez
djdmenchavez@southridge.ph
09173924392

Culture of Kindness from page 3

It is important for us to teach our boys the value of being other-focused, to find that moment when you can take the focus out of yourself and help someone out. Our boys will be husbands, fathers, workers, bosses, and so much more one day. The skill to be able to read someone's feelings and try to do something about it is important. These are not skills reserved for women just because we were created to be more relational and more feeling. If our brains can heal from traumatic injury, then it can also rewire to be more feeling, more compassionate, more kind.

We live in a world of diversity in schools, the workplace and even in our own families. Kindness is the universal language of love that encompasses diversity of all kinds and all degrees. In a time where our focus is on bullying – its causes and repercussions; when we worry about depression and anxiety as it happens earlier and more rampant among our youth; when we battle against entitlement and a lack of empathy because of the way technology has "disconnected" us rather than connecting us the way we originally thought it would; we need to find ways to rewire the "Negativity Bias" that is in all our brains because of human evolution. In the book *Resilient: How to Grow An Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength and Happiness* by Rick Hanson, the author stresses that "true resilience is much more than enduring terrible conditions. We need resilience every day to raise a family, work at a job, cope with stress,

deal with health problems, navigate issues with others, heal from old pain, and simply keep on going." Grounded in research on Positive Neuroplasticity (essentially rewiring our brain to be more positive), the author lists KINDNESS and COMPASSION as one of the key inner strengths needed for Resilience. One of my favorite lines in the book is the truth Hanson states that "our brains are like velcro to negative experiences and teflon to positive ones." We need to start being more proactive in creating positive experiences of Kindness and Compassion in our homes and especially in our schools where children spend most of their time so

*"Kindness is
the universal
language of
love that
encompasses
diversity of all
kinds and all
degrees."*

that it becomes a part of who they are and become wired into their brains. It is my dream as an educator that one day, we will have more children who default to the positive rather than the negative because we created environments, schools and communities that fostered experiences that encouraged this.

Instead of zeroing in on bullying and on the children who "create trouble," the children who misbehave and are seen as different, why can't we create a culture of Kindness and Compassion by being more proactive and preventive, rather than wait for these events to hit too close to home? We can make Kindness cool for our boys, especially at a time when technology and society tend to make us more

individualistic and disconnected. #Upliftsomeonetoday is the grade 6 Kindness Campaign hashtag for this year. We hope that it takes off to become the batch's legacy to the grade school and a message to spread when they move on to high school next year. The purpose of the campaign is to inspire the boys to find that one person each day to uplift through words, a kind gesture, or a random act. The goal is simple – to find just one person each day to apply the hashtag to. It can be the boy who eats alone, the school employee who cleans our grounds who rarely gets randomly praised for the job that he does, the parents who come to pick you up each day and who you may take for granted...sometimes grateful words make a world of a difference, the classmate who is different from everybody and struggles to fit in. In a world where labeling and name-calling are so much a part of the norm, we can create a counter culture in a place that is already an amazing seedbed of virtues. But what we can do differently is to be more proactive, to move and act and seek out that opportunity to uplift someone. Our goal should be that this becomes so much a part of our boys and their brains that to not do so in a day makes them feel uncomfortable. They say it takes 90 days to learn a new habit and that *it takes a village to raise a child*. We have an opportunity to do so now with this amazing "village" we are a part of so that we can inspire these amazing young men to become beacons of kindness and compassion wherever they go, one child, one classroom, one school, one community at a time. ■

