

“If You Can, Thank A Teacher”

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By Scott Dimauro

“If you can read this, thank a teacher.” It’s not a particularly original thought, but it’s true. If you were to think of the people who had the greatest impact on your life, chances are at least one was a teacher. Perhaps it was the kindergarten teacher who helped you read your first sentence, or the high school instructor who cajoled you into thinking differently about a social issue. Whatever the subjects or grade levels were, we all remember teachers who touched our lives.

When I think of my own memorable teachers, I do not necessarily remember what they did. Rather, I cannot forget how they affected me. Whatever methods are used, good teachers help their students to solve problems, interact with others, make decisions, explore, and reflect. Quite simply, teachers bring out the best in their students.

Teachers don’t get much glamour, but a growing percentage of the population now understands the critical importance of quality teaching in our nation. In a 2001 national survey, 62% of respondents chose teachers as the professionals who provide “the most benefit to society.” With student test data showing a high correlation between student learning and quality of instruction, an overwhelming majority placed “doing what it takes to put fully qualified teachers in every public school classroom” as their top education policy priority. Too many public and private schools across the country struggle to get highly qualified teachers in all their classrooms. Fortunately, based on all standard measures of what it takes to be “qualified,” Worthington fares extremely well in this regard.

As we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, we remember in a special way two people whose lives were tragically cut short this past year while still in the prime of their careers. Ask people who had Sheral Ferguson as their fifth grade teacher at Worthington Park or those who were in Larry Hutchison’s history and government classes at Thomas Worthington High School, and you’ll hear countless stories of how much each of these dynamic individuals truly cared about their students. Nineteenth century educator Horace Mann could have easily been speaking of Sheral and Larry when he wrote, “Teachers teach because they care. Teaching young people is what they do best.”

On behalf of all the teachers of the Worthington Schools, I thank you for supporting us throughout the years. Worthington is a school district that is respected far and wide for its tradition of excellence. We have and will continue to ensure that every student who attends our schools continues to receive the very best quality of instruction. Budget reductions, as painful as they are, will not cause us to waver in that commitment. We know that the success of our students also depends on strong parental involvement, wise stewardship from our Board and administration, the dedication of our educational support staff, and the backing from a community that has been willing to provide the resources necessary to make it all happen. Yes, teachers do bring out the best, and your support brings out the best in us.

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