

Chalk Talk - 2

This is a continuation of my journey through an unexpected world of education and the reality of what surrounds all of us as we follow our Life's Path. This continues the print copy of 'Chalk Talk.' There are more vignettes along with various aspects of my teaching that would have been difficult to put in book format. So let us move on to the rest of my Trek.

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It was in my 12th year at Dett that the then Dr. Ferris, Principal, left our school to become Superintendent of another district. She did come back to our school to say hello and bring us up to date re her work. The principals in her new district wrote out their many problems in their schools and after going over all their problems, she said that she could take care of all their concerns except a couple that dealt with technical situations. However, at that meeting she did assure all her principals that they had all ‘died and gone to heaven’ in comparison to being a principal in the Horners. Others have said something to the effect that there are many good teachers in Chicago, but it takes a special kind of teacher to teach in the inner city. It certainly was a compliment and a well-deserved one.

Baggage -

So many children enter our classrooms with so much of what I choose to call ‘baggage.’ The families they come from are as varied as the families the teachers come from. As teachers it is our duty to leave our ‘baggage’ at home, and be a professional educator, to all of the students facing the chalk board. Unfortunately, some teachers bring it to the classroom and even include it in the lesson plans. This brings forth a point I’ve felt all my years teaching: If a teacher is uncomfortable in a specific school or district because of personal racial or ethnic conflicts then they should not be a teacher there. They should teach elsewhere or preferably get into a different profession. How can these teachers teach students if they can’t see them as part of their family or just a larger family of children? Of course, they can’t. If they were allowed to choose where they felt the children could learn, they would just be passing on their prejudices. Perhaps there should be a screening system to keep them out of teaching all together. My true delight in 40 countries of travel was the sameness of children throughout the world in their laughter, tears, smiles, bright eyes and shyness. Somewhere it’s written that 90% of babies in the world all say ‘mama’. All of these little people laugh and cry in the same language. How can teachers be so detached from their charges. They know that their own children are no different than those sitting in front of them, but they just won’t accept such a reality.

Small Groups –

Forming small groups with student leaders worked well with many classes. The top readers would lead a group through stories with discussion questions I provided. The students had ‘ownership’ of the learning process, and the small groups gave everybody a chance to participate. They enjoyed the interaction, and I liked their discussions, arguments and their proving each other right or wrong. They could only prove their point from what they got out of the story. There was a lot of activity and raised voices in the room, but there was a learning process taking place. There was more activity and debating in these sessions than I could have elicited in dealing with the whole

class. When the reading session was over, then everyone got up and changed groups and seats with new math leaders. It may have seemed a bit chaotic, but they quickly settled into their new learning groups.

This same process also worked well or even better in the science and social studies disciplines. I picked up this idea from a college professor at North Park University. He would break the class into groups and give us an assignment to work on together. He would monitor our work as he walked around the room. This worked with my student groups on an elementary level. Also, encouraging students to do the *best* they could seemed more realistic than pressuring them to reach unrealistic results. Of course, high scores were the goal, but not to be achieved by all. Although, some of the slower students did surprise themselves as to how well they did when encouraged.

Section 6- Living the Violence

Grief's Children -

Teaching in the inner city is unlike teaching elsewhere. When a segment of the population is regulated to live under the worst conditions that our society i.e., national and local governments, along with corresponding institutions of banking, real estate, law enforcement and education forces upon them, this violence is the outcome. This is what entrapment in the projects, or any community with ghetto restrictions perpetuates.

When born we all start with that 'tabula rasa' as the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle put it, where we all have a clean slate. It is our society that then places its imprint upon us. The following surveys of and by students on Chicago's West Side are examples of how their 'clean slate' has been imprinted upon.

It was June 21, 1989, that Carol Marin hosted NBC television channel 5's program 'Children of Violence on the West Side' and the video 'Grief's Children.' My students and I watched the video (I still have it.). I then asked my classroom to answer the questions below.

Class Survey after watching video:

1. Is this video accurate (true)?
2. What kinds of violence have you encountered?
3. What are your fears?
4. Is it easy for you to be violent against someone else?
5. Would you be a different person if you lived somewhere else?
6. How different would your parents be in a different neighborhood?
7. Do you feel stress?
8. What does life mean to you?

- 9. What part does school have for you now and in the future?
- 10. Did you like this video? Why?

Survey responses – See Appendix 1

Violence Survey 4 Years Later -

Events like the above have an accumulative effect. After over 20 years as a teacher and the burial of so many young people, I began to dialogue with my students about violence. There was much said about the violence that surrounded them, and how it affected their lives and the lives of their families. The result was that we put together the following Violence Survey. With the cooperation of administration and teachers, these students surveyed all students in 4th through 8th grades, including their teachers. This was a project that the students owned.

The survey:

Community Problems

- A. Has this ever happened to you?
- B. Has this almost happened to you?
- C. Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?
- D. Has this ever happened to one of your friends?

Place the above letters where they apply in the following categories:

- 1. Killing_____
- 2. Shootings_____
- 3. Drugs_____
- 4. Rape_____
- 5. Stealing_____
- 6. Child Abuse_____
- 7. Fighting_____
- 8. Kidnapping_____
- 9. Gang Bangers_____
- 10. Guns_____
- 11. Knives_____
- 12. Bad Dreams_____
- 13. Suicide_____
- 14. Disease_____
- 15. T.A.P. (Teen Age Pregnancy)_____

Survey Results – See Appendix 2

Letters from The Students to The Powers -

After analyzing the responses to their surveys above, the class decided that they would write letters to the powers. Letters were sent to:

President Bill Clinton,
Senator Paul Simon,
Senator Carol Mosely Brown,
Governor Jim Edgar,
Mayor Richard M. Daley,
Vince Lane, Head of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA).
Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Matt Rodriguez.

We received replies from President Bill Clinton, Senator Paul Simon, Governor Jim Edgar, Mayor Richard M. Daley and Mr. Vince Lane.

The letters and replies are in Appendix 3.

Section Seven - Environmental Difficulties

Then there are times when a student's achievement in school is not as important as overcoming some of the problems in their lives. Helping students to overcome the difficulties of their environment was a prerequisite to their learning and achieving in school. Guiding students through these impediments that prohibit their success is a constant part of a teacher's role. Part of this is building students' self-esteem, self-worth and self-respect as mentioned above. Their success can be linked to their expectations. For example: I felt they could learn. I expected them to learn. I prepared them to learn, and the results were numerous achievements beyond expectations. The best part for me was seeing the joy of those students who did better than they themselves expected. Great expectations are important.

Unfortunately, there was this competition of what we teachers wanted for our students and what the streets and porches confronted them with. This was of extreme importance to me knowing what my students were faced with on the streets and porches regarding drugs and violence. I related to my students the experience my brother and I went through at about the age of 10 and 12. We were coming home from school one afternoon and found a cigarette on the sidewalk. There were matches nearby. We lit the cigarette and puffed, giggled and coughed. We switched it back and forth and finished it. Then we walked around the corner to our third-floor apartment. Our father was home and immediately said, "So you boys have been smoking!" How

he knew we didn't know. Then he went on to tell us that he had smoked for many years in his youth. He gave it up years later. What he said next, I've never forgotten. He asked us about our healthy bodies and working minds. He mentioned sports that we wanted to get into in the future. His point was that smoking and anything else (alcohol) we put in our bodies could affect our bodies and minds. That was a while back and look what the kids were facing when I was teaching and up through the present time, with all the mind altering and body destroying drugs and other substances. Our father told us that he couldn't watch over us as we traveled the streets and alleys of Chicago. We would have to decide what we wanted to do with our bodies and minds. No one could make that decision for us but us. Our bodies and minds were solely our responsibility. That was in the '40s and look what the kids were confronted with from the '1970s to 2000 my teaching years, and up to today with all the new mind altering and body destroying substances.

Collaborating -

Creating learning incentives was paramount in collaborating with the students. For example, incentives for learning were especially needed on Friday afternoons after lunch with the upcoming weekend just an hour or so away. It was the most difficult time of the week. During hot weather days it was worse. This was a good time for independent learning. In my case, if the students kept up with their classwork and homework during the week, this would be their time to work on their own, or in small groups. It could be computer work to write stories or poems, art or map activities or even playing chess. It would be in a learning environment. For those students who were behind in any work, they would go to another classroom and sit in the back to finish their work. I've always appreciated the faculty around me and the cooperative spirit in which we supported each other. This cooperative learning approach was instilled in me by my first principal and stayed with me over the years.

Those students who were especially helpful in tutoring, or helping their classmates were always rewarded by going on extra field trips with primary teachers. They liked working with their former teachers, and the teachers liked them in assisting with the little ones. There were also other varied rewards.

During my first dozen years there was a collaboration between administration and teachers where there was an atmosphere of joint effort for the best challenges for student achievement. Top-down administration proved not to be the best way for a good educational process to work. There had to be collaborative purpose between administration and faculty. And in my case working with parents proved a better reality for student growth. My efforts were to bring the family into the classroom as a joint educational effort. Success starts in the classrooms and moves up throughout the whole school. It didn't make sense to me that parents were generally absent from the classroom. Perhaps this came down from my elementary school days where many parents were involved in our school, although they weren't in the classroom. My

reality was that I liked parents in the classroom for their assistance and most importantly as mentioned making the classroom central for students, parents and teachers. This would not work in high schools, but in my case, I wanted and needed that union. To me this was all elementary to preparing the students for high school.

It was my third year at Dett that launched me into a path I followed for over a dozen years. It was as a Special Reading Teacher. It began for 6th graders that would be going onto middle school for their 7th and 8th years. With the support and assistance of our principal, a program was set up for parents or relatives to participate in my reading classes. Too many students had low reading scores and there was a need for help getting them ready for middle school. I sent a letter to the parents asking if they could spare 45 minutes per week to assist me. “This is your child’s opportunity to catch-up on the basic reading skills. We have material and equipment but need more adult assistance.” Enclosed with the letter was a weekly schedule of those nine adults who were already assisting me. Soon there were more. Not only were the parents and relatives a definite asset, but their presence also changed the total atmosphere of the program. The students were more attentive and there was no time for frivolity. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles worked in my classroom over many years, sitting beside their child and with someone else’s child.

A good example of this collaboration with a parent came with Mrs. Glen who visited my class about her son’s work. After a brief discussion, I invited her to sit in and observe my teaching. After going over a lesson with the students, they were given a seat assignment and I walked around the class checking their work. Soon she asked if she could help, as students’ hands were being raised faster than I could get to them. I assented. She enjoyed working with the children, and asked if she could come back the next day. She said she had nothing to do except watch over her youngest son and TV. She liked being in the classroom. After telling her that she was welcome any time, she asked if bringing her four-year old would be alright. She was concerned that he might distract the students. I said yes, and that I would have something for him to do. A kindergarten teacher gave me some materials for the four-year old. The next day her child had materials to work with. I told her that she could work with her son. Her reply was, “Naw, I can get him at home. Johnnie here can use my help.” Another day she came to my desk with our math workbook and wanted me to explain a math problem to her. We went over it together, and she soon understood it. She went back to the student and said, “Come on, I understand it now.” She then explained it to her little charge and went on to other students. What a delight she was to have in the classroom. Something that I noticed, and hadn’t expected, was that she, just one parent, while assisting me, changed the classroom atmosphere. It was as though the students felt, ‘If this mother is here then it must be important.’ This same change occurred when I put together that ‘adult tutoring weekly schedule’. Learning had changed from a teacher ‘thing’ to a teacher-parental ‘thing.’

Another time there was a parent hovering outside my door and peeking in. She was invited in, and we talked a few minutes and then asked her to join us. She took a seat and observed my teaching. She joined in helping me, by going to any student who raised their hand with questions, as I was doing.

An elderly man came to see me because his granddaughter wasn't getting good scores on her tests for various reasons. He was shown my lesson schedule and what was expected from the students. That is, their Social Studies reading and homework assignments. He was surprised because she told him that there were no homework assignments. He was given an extra textbook to take home to monitor her work and told that he was welcome in my classroom any time. She got caught in her little game. The best part is that he monitored her work, visited the class and she did well after that. Oh yes, her mother, Phyllis Jones, had been one of my favorite students, years earlier.

When I think of all the parents or family members that were assisting me by their tutoring in my classes, I think of how it perhaps empowered them to keep that experience well into the future with their children. I have a feeling that Mrs. Glen and other parents have continued in that spirit in tutoring their grandchildren. And then, there is the ripple effect that goes on and on.

Even my mother told me her reality. When I was moving up in elementary school, she told me that she couldn't help me very much, because she was raised on a farm in Wisconsin, and could attend school only up to 3rd grade. Farm work was more important. My older brother and sister took over helping me. Our father put it quite directly to us: Your job is to go to school and learn. Never give me any excuses because of a teacher who did this or that. It's your responsibility to learn.

Teacher/Student –

So often so many students come into the classroom with overwhelming problems. As mentioned above I did have the desire to be a social worker. All that paperwork just turned me off, and I went into teaching. 'Social Worker' is just one of the many entitlements that come under the description of Teacher. It's there, if you want to venture there. Of course, most teachers accept that as part of the job. We just don't get recompense for that unstated need. It's like working overtime as a volunteer. Just at my school alone I've seen so many teachers working tenderly with their charges over their problems. At times they worked very firmly with their overwhelmed and angry charges. And then there were the plain 'bull sessions' the male teachers had with the boys, or the 'girl talk' with the female teachers. Those were the real teacher/student learning lessons. I know how many times it's occurred at my school, and indubitably it occurs throughout every school in America, and throughout the world. Another entitlement word that comes under Teacher is 'Parent' or foster parent.

Section 8 - Rewards of Teaching

The above student discussions are mentioned because they represent some of the beauty of teaching. Being in a school for many years and having had family members sitting in front of you, makes teaching almost a family affair. When you have a son or daughter of a former student, and then cousins and nephews, it's all family. The parent visits are like reunions. When I started seeing grandchildren of my original students, I felt it was time to retire. That had been thirty years with my back to the chalkboard. My classroom felt like my 'one-room-schoolhouse.' All the above covered my personal criteria and methodologies dealing with being in the educational field. I applied the adage, 'Give a man a fish and he, eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime,' to my teaching. This was used while in the Peace Corps when working with men who collaborated to build their own concrete chalets, instead of living in wooden shacks or in temporary United Fruit Company housing. They now live in their own sturdy homes and more have been built since then. Like fishing, I have tried to teach my children how to teach themselves, so that they can learn for the rest of their lives.

What is the reward that draws men and women into the teaching profession? There must be a reason men and women become teachers. Those people distant from the classroom seem to feel that altruism is enough. If people like to deal with young people. then they really don't need a lot of money or benefits. Of course, this is not true as we have families and the same bills as everyone else and it is not a selfless concern for the welfare of others. Teaching is a profession of giving your best to prepare our sons and daughters for a good future. There are numerous attributes given to teachers, such as,

- > Teachers affect eternity, one can never tell where their influence ends.
- > When you open a school door, you close a cell door.
- > The true aim of a teacher is to kindle minds.
- > Teachers make impressions on the mind and heart that last forever.
- > Awaken interest and kindle enthusiasm leads to success in teaching.
- > To know how to suggest is the art of teaching.

Nice awards and plaques have been given to me over my teaching years which are appreciated; however, they can't compare to an unexpected phone call from a former student sharing an accomplishment they've experienced, an update on their life, a letter of thanks for something you've shared together, an 8" X 9 1/2" wooden cut out of an apple inscribed 'You're My Favorite Teacher' and the thank you from parents.

This does lead humbly, to tell of the joy of receiving a thank you from a child for being of significance, just for a moment, in their life. Then quickly the child moves on and is out of your life. They may not be around for long, but the memory stays. Yes, these are benefits without negotiations.

The following recognitions came to me, as to teachers everywhere. I am just one of so many who have this privilege of being rewarded for doing what is a joy. As you read these anecdotes realize that these are the true rewards of teaching and working with our charges.

Of course, a good salary and benefits are a necessity, too.

Here is an example of what made an impression upon me. It was in my third year of teaching that the true reward of teaching dawned on me. Some students that I had worked with in my first two years and had left for middle school came back to see me before moving on to high school. They didn't thank me for anything but were just telling me about what they were doing, what they had done and what they were planning to do. It was a realization for me that they wanted to tell me about themselves and were comfortable enough to share themselves with me. It told me that there was value in what I was doing. It gave me a lift to keep on, keeping on. Of course, again this quirk is not just for me. Most teachers experience this same ritual.

The importance for me was that I had made an impact on their lives in one way or another. This is a bonus for teachers, knowing of our impact on students' lives. It's a little like self-propulsion to the next group of little strangers. It did propel me into the next 27 years. This is the true experience of teaching and why teachers have put up with so much crap from administrators, politicians and at times the public as well. It's a relationship of student-teacher and the impact we can have on one another. That's what it's all about!

A final lasting 'reward' for me is from a former student. She felt that my influence upon her was enough for us to become business partners in the:

'Idell-McCarthy Foundation for Second Chances.'

Thank you, Sharita (Farmer) Cenac.

Vignettes

V# 61 Ebonics -

One of my first assignments was to meet weekly with a group of honor students to read and discuss selections from The Great Books Program. The class was a joy because they were all good readers and discussions were fun and lively. It was a good break from tutoring. A general question from one of the students, relevant at the time, stayed with me, and my answer, I hope, with him and the rest of the group. He wanted to know why he had to learn book English, which wasn't spoken at home or in the neighborhood. I gave the example of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. When he was downtown with Charlie (the white man in authority) talking about what was needed in his community, he spoke Charlie's standard school English. When he was in his community, he would speak the black dialect, termed Ebonics at the time, or standard English, depending on the situation. So, I told Robin that when he was home or on the street, he could talk any way he wanted, but when he was talking to Charlie about a job, then he'd better speak Charlie's language. I've wondered if speaking Ebonics would be considered bilingual in the inner city.

V# 62 One Day in Kindergarten -

It was about a week or so after starting at Dett that I was sent around to different rooms to sub, assist or observe for a future assignment. This day it was in kindergarten, and it almost intimidated me. These were the real 'squirmies' and the day loomed eternal. To myself I said, "Just do it!", and I got right into the lesson plan left for me. This soon had me on the floor with them and into "You sing along, and I'll sing along, and we'll all sing along together."

I noticed throughout the day other teachers and aides peering in through the window with smiles on their faces, or a hand to cover a bit of giggling. Once I loosened up it turned into an interesting adventure for the rest of the day. As a new father of a six-year-old, this larger family of children was a trip for me. I don't remember now all that went on those many years ago, but I did enjoy it. Also, I was glad the testing was over, and I didn't substitute in kindergarten again. But I did gain a true appreciation for what a Kindergarten teacher deals with every day. Parents, of course, know their child and must appreciate a teacher dealing with a few dozen more. And that goes for every grade level.

V# 63 Foxhole of Education -

For one of my girls the real 'foxhole of education' was the bathroom. She told me that she had to sit and study in the bathroom because her younger siblings were so

nosy running around the apartment, as well as there being a blaring television. Despite these distractions, she always turned in her homework.

The point here is that the home environment should also be that learning environment. The question arises, why weren't her brothers and sisters doing their homework, and if too young, there still could have been some sort of learning atmosphere.

V# 64 Tardiness -

The following incidents are a few examples of these roles: There is always the case of tardiness and finding solutions for this common problem. Here was a quiet student, soft spoken and a bit timid or perhaps just gentle. He was also late to school quite often. Our office was overloaded with more serious issues, and this was not that offensive, so I handled this myself, as most teachers would have. I told him that he must understand the importance of being on time. He listened but not much changed. He continued to quietly enter the classroom 20 to 30 minutes late. So, it got to the point one day that I got a bit firmer with him thinking that it would stop his tardiness. Not so! It just brought about his absence.

He quietly entered the room three days later. I asked him how he was and if he had been sick. No, he wasn't sick. It turned out that he had no scheduled hours to go to bed or arise in the morning. He wasn't awakened by anyone in the morning. It was a rather convoluted system at his home. Not wanting him to be absent anymore, I told him to come to school every day and to try to be on time, but to come no matter what time he awoke. Being too firm didn't work. The gentler touch worked better as his timing did improve.

V# 65 Alarm Clock -

Then a few years later there was a girl who also was late quite often. She was a good worker and studied hard. One day I queried her about her tardiness. She explained that she tried to be on time, but her mother left early for work, and it was up to her to get up. She didn't like being late for school but just couldn't get up early enough every day. What about an alarm clock? They didn't have one, although she wished they did. The next day I gave her an alarm clock. She was very appreciative and thanked me a few times. She was never late after that.

V# 66 5 – 10 minutes late -

There was another case of getting to school just on time, and once or twice a week five or ten minutes late. This depended on how the early morning traffic was and how I could maneuver through it. Yes, it was me! This was my first year of teaching, which included my night schedule of teaching at a downtown English Language Institute on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 6 to 9 p.m. It was a rough schedule with

getting home around 10 p.m. Going over my students' homework was not difficult because I would be downtown at 3:30 which gave me ample time to work on that. But adding it all up with home responsibilities and such made rising in the a.m. rough at times. That really didn't last very long in that I was given a lesson by my principal. She gently told me one morning that she understood about my evening work and family obligations, but I should consider how to readjust my scheduling to be in school before the 8:30 a.m. teacher check in time Her gentle nudge was enough for me and is probably why I could understand some of my students' individual circumstances, even though they lived just across the street or a couple buildings down Lake Street.

V# 67 What Can He Control and Not Control? -

Another time something seemed to be overwhelming one of my boys. It was the confusion he displayed during a few talks we had. Something was bothering him. During my free period (the students' library or art class), I took him back to the classroom to discuss this. There was so much on his mind that he didn't know where to begin. It was obvious from previous discussions that there were problems at home and on the street. He was given a sheet of paper and pen, and I told him to list everything that was on his mind that was troubling him. I would not look at the paper. It would be his private list. He was to list everything whether at home, on the porch, street or school. When he had finished writing everything, I told him to put the letter A in front of everything that he had no control over. This would include things that his parents, as adults, had to decide for him. Also, he should know the fact that he had to go to school now but would have other choices in the future when he was a man. Next, he was to put a B in front of those listed that he had control over, i.e., those that he could do something about at the present time. Like how he was dealing with his classmates or how they were dealing with him, on the playground or building. We discussed the items that he felt comfortable going over only. He was able to go over quite a bit about what was bothering him. He was able to separate what he had control over and what he didn't. At the end of the session, I suggested that he put all his problems where they belonged. Tear up the paper in small pieces and put them in the waste basket. He had been able to unload his mind of a great deal that bothered him. He had separated what he could control, and what he couldn't. We discussed how in the future, when he felt overwhelmed by things, he could make a list to get them out of his head. He could then look over the list and better decide what he could and couldn't control, and act accordingly. Then rip up and dump. After that session he was a more attentive student and seemed more relaxed.

V# 68 Trash the Past -

And there was a boy who entered my 5th grade classroom about three months into the school year. He transferred from another school on the West Side. No records came from his former school. A quick diagnosis told me about where he would fit in

the three reading and three math groups. I told him that he would begin in the middle groups, and if he earned 90's and 100's on his tests after a few weeks, that he would be moved up to the top level. He was a quiet and mannerly student, and it was nice having him in the class. He did move up in both reading and math within a few weeks. After two months his records came from his previous school. It was a folder bulging with papers. His academic records were not as important as all the notes from previous teachers and the principal. He had been written up for dozens of things. It completely astonished me how badly he behaved at that school. It was apparent by all the notes and letters that they wanted to warn me, their next teacher, of this student. No doubt he was kicked out because of his behavior. Well, what to do? During a free period, I kept him back for a talk. After telling him that his records had arrived his face went ashen. He couldn't look at me. His head went down when he saw the pile of papers. He was very uncomfortable. Nothing was discussed about what had happened in his previous school, but he was asked if the problems that he had at that school were in the past, and if they would remain there. He said yes. I told him that his hard work and good behavior in my class was excellent and asked if it would continue that way. He said yes it would continue that way. I asked him if he wanted these papers to remain in his folder for future teachers to see, or if he would like to rip them all up and put them where they belonged - in the waste basket. He was appreciative of being able to 'trash his past' and move on. There was nary a problem with him while in my class.

V#69 Teaching or Preaching-

On the lighter side there were the questions, questions, and questions that our bright-eyed charges wanted answers to. There is so much they want to know that is not in the books but is on their minds. Our lesson plans are filled with objectives that must be covered over the year; however, our students are at that critical age when their minds are bombarded with queries about what they experience in the hood, see on television, or at church.

During a social studies lesson, they had a fund of questions dealing with religion, or more precisely about religions around the world. My college course on Comparative Religions kicked in and allowed me to give brief descriptions of different faiths. And of course, God. Ah, so many questions about God. My final statement about God was that throughout the world people worship their God in many ways and have different names for their God. My bottom line on the various faiths was of God being on the top of a mountain with numerous paths to reach the top. What is important is that although we may be on a different trail than those around us, we should not try to knock others off their path because we don't agree with them. The questions and

answers continued and while I was making a point of something Laverne raised his hand and asked, “Mr. McCarthy, are you teaching or preaching?” That cracked me up and made me laugh with the response, “Thank you Mr. Harris! Perhaps I may have strayed off our lesson. Enough! Everyone, turn to the next page in your book. Amen.”

V# 70 D-a-w-ghee -

The most startling reaction from my students was to one of my experiences related to a visit in Beijing, China. I traveled with a professor to give lectures at a university. A family was referred to us who would watch over us and show us the sights of the city. After a few days of touring the eldest son of the family, Fu Dong, took us to a special Korean eatery for breakfast. We stood in a long line outside and entered a single file to the serving tables. This was assuredly a special treat. Only one dish was served, chunks of meat in a red gravy or sauce. Of interest to me was that there were no women in the line or sitting at the tables. This was strictly a man’s thing. Also, everyone ate eagerly and with relish. At our table my companion started right in to savor the flavor of this delicious smelling dish. I waited a while before starting my meal to look around as the men around us were devouring their breakfast. Then Fu Dong asked me if I ever ate ‘dawg’ before. I asked what that was. He said, “You know, it’s spelled ‘d-a-w-ghee’.” I responded, “Do you mean dog, spelled ‘d-o-g?’” He said, yes, that’s it, ‘d-a-w-ghee!’” I turned to my companion and asked, “How do like the ‘d-a-w-ghee?’” His response as he shoveled in more red meat and gravy, without hesitation, was that it was delicious. So, without further ado, I dug in and ate a (quite) delicious breakfast of red dog.

When I finished relating the story, my class went bananas. “You ate a dog?” “Yuck!” “Mr. McCarthy, how could you do such a thing?” “Oh, you’re gross!” And on and on it went, and how terrible that was ...! And then, them telling me that they had dogs, and how gross and disgusting that was! I immediately decided not to tell them what I had eaten in Peru, Equator, Panama and other countries.

V# 71 Tea or Coffee -

Sometimes it can be difficult to keep the students’ attention on a lesson so it may be necessary to embellish stories a bit to enlighten, amuse and keep them awake. In this case while going over the Civil War era in our history I started with, “It was while I was having lunch with Lincoln, President Abraham Lincoln that is.” Then a voice called out from the class, “You knew Abraham Lincoln?” My response, “Well, I only had lunch with Mr. Lincoln twice because he was so busy at that time.” “Wow!” “Gee!” Came the expletives. I went on with my historical event, “Well, after our meal

we talked and sipped our drinks for a while, when the lady serving us asked if we wanted more to drink. President Lincoln looked at his cup and mused his reply, 'If this is coffee, give me tea. And, if this is tea give me coffee.'" There were the ooohs and ahhs from some of the class while the YGBs* sitting in the back of the room, rolled their eyes smirkingly and laughed softly.

*(Young Gifted and Black)

V# 72 Tutoring -

When my teaching career took off in '72 my salary was under \$14,000 per year. Not enough with those large classes of 40 plus students along with other issues on our union agenda. Finally, one issue in negotiations finally worked out. It was distributing our salary over the full twelve-month year. Before that we got paid for the months we worked, and no paychecks came during the summer months. Those were rough summers as it was difficult putting money aside for those months.

My way of dealing with this situation was to start a tutoring business. That was teaching elementary or secondary levels in reading and math, as well as ESL on any level for children and adults. My business card read English Language Instructor for Individuals or Small Groups. This covered the north side of Chicago and suburbs. There were numerous and varied students from elementary grades through college. These were captive and exciting students because they wanted to learn, and they or their parents paid for the learning experience.

An unusual daunting challenge came to me from a community about thirty miles north of Evanston. There were two young girls that needed instruction to prepare them for their first experience of going to school. The youngest was age appropriate for first grade and the older for sixth grade. My understanding was that their grandmother raised them, but they were never enrolled in school. She was a gypsy queen and had recently died. So now was the time for formal schooling. My job was to prepare them over the summer for fall classes. It became a personal challenge to see if the older girl would be able to cover five years of growth in eight weeks.

The youngest was no problem whatsoever. She absorbed everything presented to her and she was more than 1st grade ready by the end of summer. The twelve-year old was another story. Her diagnostic testing that I administered didn't take long to analyze because she had no reading skills at all. She was only able to recognize three words on two lists of words, one being the sight vocabulary. They were 'love', 'them' and 'girl'. My work was cut out for me. On my way home that first day my mind was actively sorting out every strategy feasible to get her ready for 6th grade.

I brought a load of materials to cover first through fifth grades from my home. Also, there were the materials from my TESL evening program which included charts of family of words, word picture cards, sound pronunciation and various and numerous workbooks etc. That was a summer of intense instruction at their home followed by a load of homework for them every day and weekends.

They were both very conscientious workers and learned daily. Seeing them progress as they did made me feel good going home every day and then driving there the next day to see how much progress could be made. The advancement in her reading was exciting to see and hear. Well, by the end of summer she had mastered reading skills and vocabulary development for a 5th grader. She was ready for 6th grade according to the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) that I administered to her.

Oh yes, it was apparent that their mother was monitoring my work because as a Fortune Teller she read the palms of visitors on the enclosed porch off the front room or was it my first 'one-room-schoolhouse' where my two students and I toiled together.

That was one of my best challenges.

V# 73 Mission Work -

This anecdote deals with another role of a teacher – that I never expected. A college student entered my class one afternoon and asked if I remembered her. No, I didn't. She explained that she had visited and observed my class two years earlier. At that time, she was attending a Christian college in Wisconsin or Minnesota and a group of students from that college were allowed to visit schools in Chicago's inner city. She happened to observe my class on that visit. She was presently attending Moody Institute on Chicago's near north side. She wanted to work in my class to complete requirements for one of her courses. Of course, I consented. She worked well with individual tutoring and small group lessons. During her tenure we discussed many things including her future plans. Her plan was to become a missionary. As a single woman and on her own she had a lot to think about. One of my suggestions was that since she worked well with the children in my classroom and liked them, that she would probably be a missionary teacher. My point then was that working in the inner city of Chicago was certainly missionary work. Also, that all teachers are on a mission. It may not revolve around a particular faith, but it is our mission to move our students up one grade level while they are sitting in front of us. I explained that my wife and I worked in the Republic of Panama while in the Peace Corps, and that we could be considered secular missionaries. We were there to help give assistance to the community for their better future.

The point being that she could do her mission work right here in Chicago. More importantly if she was a teacher, she would be secure in a decent paying job with health benefits, a pension and still fulfilling her missionary commitment. She did consider this new idea for her future. That summer after completing an internship in a southern state she became a teacher on Chicago's south side. After many years she contacted me to say that she was married and had a son and living in a southern suburb.

V# 74 Only to see me. -

What a pleasant surprise to see him enter the room. He had been my student about five years earlier. At that time, he was a few years behind in grade level when he was in my Title I, reading class. He was small for his age and years in school. He had an older brother in the upper cycle, who was tall, good looking and outgoing. They didn't seem like brothers at all. There was something about my little guy that impressed me. He didn't talk much, but he listened focused with his eyes on what was being said. It was as if he was reading what I was saying. He was slow and precise with his short statements or answers. He worked intensely.

When his grandmother came on parenting night, and queried about his progress, I told her not to worry, that her grandson would do quite well in the future. He was a steady and determined worker, and even though he was behind in his reading and math skills, I was certain that he would catch up and be on level soon, as he was the hardest worker in the class.

There was the time a student interrupted him when he was working on an assignment. George got quite angry at being interrupted and told the other boy not to bother him. Then he continued with his work. Nobody interrupted him again.

Well, here he was to see me. We talked for what seemed a long time. He was in high school. His grades were good. He was on the track team and now is taller than me. He had changed a great deal. It was wonderful seeing him again, and then I realized we had been talking for quite a while. I apologized for taking up so much of his time, and said that he would want to see other teachers. He looked me in the eyes and said, "No, I just came to see you." That memory still chokes me up.

We kept in touch after that. He was married, managed a drug store and two McDonalds at the same time while his wife ran a flower shop on the north side of Chicago. Rewards don't get much better than visiting only to see me.

V# 75 I Understand It Now... Swish -

It was a rough week. Not everything went according to my plans. It would mean reteaching things not grasped. It was Friday and I felt like – Logan in "Death of a Salesman." My homework in my not-so-brief briefcase was loaded with so many papers to correct. Head down, while unlocking the door of my car in the parking lot I heard shouting from across the street. There was one of the twins in my class racing toward Western Avenue. Part of my feeling of fatigue was that she could not grasp the 2-3 multiplication lessons all week. Her twin caught on right away, but not her. I had tried everything, even special tutoring. She was, at that moment, on my mind as to what to do about her multiplication next week.

And now here she was running down the sidewalk shouting to me, "I understand it now! I just got it! I understand it now. Thank you!" *Swish*, and she was off and gone.

What a sensational feeling. My head went up. My shoulders straightened up. My doom and gloom feeling just evaporated. Driving home was like floating along. The week wasn't so bad after all.

V# 76 A letter four years after retirement... -

“Remember Me? I can't believe it's been four years already. Are you still traveling around the world? ... my high school teacher... since he hasn't been to any of the places that he teaches about, he can't really explain in great detail what really happened and what it's like to be there. But I am glad that I got a chance to learn from you everything there is to know about history, and actually feel like I've been on the same journey as you.”

V# 77 Mr. Advice Man -

The best part of teaching is the young people you meet and the impact there is on each other's lives. This story was written while I was still teaching on November 19, 1990, Thanksgiving night. I retired nine years later.

She comes in and sits down on a desk. It seems a pattern now. She's done it many times over the past year. It's easy to see that she has something on her mind. She starts with one of her precious openings: “You know Mr. McCarthy, it doesn't seem fair... .” And then she goes into account of an injustice that has soured her for the time being. She'll sit there erect with her shoulders back and not looking at me, but straight ahead and talk into space. When she has deep concerns that's what she does. She just looks past me and talks without stopping. When it's all out, she looks at me with those sad or questioning round eyes. Then I talk – she listens. She talks – I listen. Her concerns are always genuine, otherwise she wouldn't sit in her official erect position of: I've got something on my mind that I want to talk over with you. How precious is her honesty and out-pouring of what was on her mind. There is the unloading of her burden – the give and take – the honest queries, all at a critical time in a 11 or 12-year age. The uniqueness to say that she'll think over this idea or that one. And no, she doesn't agree with me but will think about it. There is the sigh of resignation when there is no resolution, or the outcome is not what she would like. But what a smile when she has a happy result.

I didn't have a daughter, but I tried to answer as best as I could. There were times when nothing had to be said. Those times it was just her getting it all out of her cranium, rather than having a mess of things swirling around in her mind. My being just a listening board was all that was needed. Her protestation of “No! No! Mr. McCarthy, that's not right!” was her ability to disagree in such a pleasant and honest way that made our discussions very endearing to me. While she may disagree, she is still searching and searching yet still politely protesting. Yet me thinks not too much protesting, just enough for a youth's determination not to give in and at the same time

the understanding of a respect that had become a mutual right from the beginning of our unique, person to person relationship.

Well, it got to the point where she came into the room one morning and said, “Mr. Advice Man, I have something that I want to” And off she’d go on her monologue. That title really cracked me up and was my title from then on. It is a precious gift we are given when we can share in the lives of our little people. Their wonderment at things new, and the excitement of discovery. It’s like reliving a beginning. It’s hard to remember my own as I meandered through my maze of youth, but it is genuinely exciting seeing it in our charges.

The other scenario that ‘trips me out’ is her laughing and joking. She’ll tell me funny things and laugh with a face that lights up, eyes that smile, a voice that smiles and a contenance that is contagious. However, there are so many problems these kids encounter that many are too sober due to their reality, that the joy and laughter and smiles are harder to come by and they don’t stay long. Their time in school may be but an interlude between realities of a serious existence, rather than school as a place where there may be a means to a happier and better existence.

Then there is the fun for her. Boys like her, tease her and, then she complains. It is what most girls complain about at that age, it’s fun to be liked and teased and chased but sometimes boys are too rough, and it can hurt.

Her visits went into the next year when she had moved up to seventh grade. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving was a sober time for her when she came into my room after lunch and sat down with her shoulders back and started talking looking straight ahead. This was a serious one. The fact that my sixth-grade class was in session really didn’t matter (to her). She told Mr. Roper, her seventh-grade teacher, that she wanted to talk to me right away rather than go to her art class. He is very sensitive to the children’s needs and said, okay. My students, after twelve weeks now, were used to students, parents, former students or teachers coming in to say hello, check up on their children letting me know what they were doing or bringing lists, records and such. Some in the class would look, listen, and stop their work until I looked at them and ‘lip said’ to keep working.

“Hi, what’s up?” I queried.

“Well, you wanted to talk to me about my grades and they are not good. Yes, they are down in my first semester in seventh grade. Yes, there are many things happenings in the upper cycle departmental. Yes, being a cheerleader takes time.”

“I don’t understand. You did so well in sixth grade and your first marking period in seventh grade is so bad.” I replied.

“I don’t know, a lot of things are happening.”

After ten minutes of queries and explanations it comes out.

“I’m moving to Arkansas.” “Well, that is a surprise. Do you want to go?” I ask.

“Yes!”

“Is your whole family moving?” I ask.

“No, just me!”

“Why, what happened?” I ask.

“Well, you know, I’ve been around here a long time and

Wow, what a girl. Time to move on. This place has given her all she needs and it’s time to move on. I guess this is a prime example of why she ‘tripped me out’ all last year. I told her that I would really miss her. We seemed to have shared so much in such a short time in our serious learning environment that left time to teach, scold, praise, laugh, tease and share.

Of course, in her style, she left room for herself...

“If I don’t like it, I’ll be back!”

Today she probably wouldn’t want to go back to those memories of her not knowing that much at that age. I think that the pride she had then would manifest itself more today, with a personal assurance that she was never in doubt about herself. I certainly did enjoy her for that time. It was in her innocent prideful honesty of doubt that everybody does or should go through at that vulnerable age. She was typical of young people of that age looking for answers as they traversed that complicated road of adolescence.

V# 78 Mr. Answer Man -

It came as quite a surprise to me when a few years later another sixth grader started asking for advice. Not just questions. She wanted advice as to what to do about different things that were happening in her life. I’d known the family of this girl for quite a while, and she started to come in early before school started. Like the girl Jenille above, the questions and concerns were genuine. She just wanted affirmation or another option from me. I was experienced by this time and felt I could handle anything asked. Then one morning she came in and said, “Good morning, Mr. Answer Man!” Another title that brought a smile to my face. These sessions would go on for quite a while. There was no time frame or schedule. When something bothered the students, I was supposed to have the answer. What was happening, of course, was the reality that I’d taught her brother and I knew the family. As families get to know a teacher the relationship is more casual or trusting, and a comfort zone develops where such conversations transpire. I’ve seen this in most of the teachers I’ve known. It’s like a family relationship.

That was the beauty of teaching 6th grade with all the questions. In 5th they didn’t know the questions and in 7th and 8th they had all the answers. My boys would ask questions, but they were of a different nature. Many were discussions that dealt with bewilderment at reacting to their surroundings. The questioning and discussions with girls seemed to deal with a future vision, while the boys dealt with the reality of what to do today.

V# 79 “I can’t believe you did that...” -

“Did what?” I responded to Christine, the student teacher. It was after school, and we were driving home together.

“You chewed out that student for laughing in class with another student, and then five minutes later you congratulate him. How could you change in such a short time?” “Oh, that’s easy! During my explanation of the problem on the board to the class, both boys were talking and laughing. They were both chewed out for not paying attention and for disturbing the class. Then later when I asked that question, that one answered it and did it in detail. He was congratulated for his good in-depth reply, but I also said that he was too smart to be messing around in class and that I only wanted the best from him.”

“But...”

“Well, he deserved the chewing out, and he deserved the congratulations.”

The bottom line afterwards was that he didn’t mess around in class anymore. Also, it was at his graduation over a year later that his mother came up to me and said that I was his favorite teacher. That was a pleasant surprise.

V# 80 Pride, and Passing It On -

Our field trip to a theatrical play was over and the next part was lunch at McDonalds. Our three busloads of students emptied into the restaurant for the awaiting burgers, fries and shakes that were previously ordered. While the students were in line and beginning to be seated, I noticed the silhouette of a boy on one of the buses. I asked one of the teachers if he was her student. Mary said it was a boy who wouldn’t come into McDonalds. He didn’t have any money. She had offered to pay for his lunch, but he wouldn’t accept her offer. I went out to the bus and sat on the seat across the aisle from him. He was staring out the window in an avoidance position.

“Your teacher offered to pay for your lunch, but you said no. Right?!”

“Yes!”

“You won’t accept help or money from anyone?”

“Uh huh!”

“You’re too proud to accept money?!”

“Mm huh!”

“Hmm, now this presents a problem for me.”

He had a quizzical look on his face, as if, why is it your problem?

“You see, when my brother, sister and I were young, a lot of people helped our family when we were in need. They never asked for anything back. They just saw a need and helped. My problem is that those people are no longer around, and I can’t pay them back in any way. So, let me suggest.”

“If I were to give you money now for lunch, would you be willing to do the same for a young boy or girl in the future when you have a job, and some money?”

He turned to look at me and his eyes lit up with surprise on his face.

“Yes, I can do that!”

He got a five spot, with a future promise of a lunch for a future someone.

And I got to pass it on.

V# 81 Overnight Change -

Then there was one of my students who became a totally different person overnight. She was a good hard-working student who suddenly wasn't doing her work. It was apparent that she was totally troubled. Once again, the principal, SCR, the social worker and I collaborated. The SCR and social worker became totally involved with the situation. What came out was that the mother had a new man who was hitting on the daughter. The mother was in a dilemma because she didn't want to lose her man, so the student's problem wasn't being attended to properly. Through a great deal of work my student was sent to live with a relative in another part of the city. I missed her because we had gotten to know each other better through this problem.

It was about seven years later one evening that I received a surprise phone call from her. She wanted me to know that all was well with her. She was in college studying to become a nurse.

What a shot in the arm that was for me i.e., an internal boost in being appreciated for helping a young girl through a rough time who was now on her own path to a better future. A true reward!

V# 82 I never had a male teacher. -

“When I first came to sixth grade, I thought I was going to hate it, because I never had a male teacher.” ... Then in eighth grade, “Hopefully you would stay here longer, and give future students the same treatment, knowledge, hope, training and guidance that you gave me and your other past students.”

And thank you Charice, as you tripped me out like all the other students.

V# 83 Another Evening Phone Call -

“Well, hello, what a surprise call. How are you, and what's up?”

“All is well with me.”

After a few minutes of catching up with each other, he said, “I'm calling to let you know that I passed it on. One of my students and his parents were in need, and I passed it on.”

“Thank you for letting me know.”

I had helped him financially when he was in college a few years earlier and now he was a teacher on the East Coast. Rather than paying me back, I told him to pass it on in the future when he was able. And it passes on!

My stipulation for helping a student was for them to finish their education and when they were able, to pass it on to another in need. The hope being that it could be passed on and on into the future – the ripple effect.

V# 84 ... is outgoing, outspoken and a nice character. -

That's what a student wrote about me the year after I retired. I like that 'nice character' bit. It still brings forth a smile.

Yes, I did work with him through some difficulties he was going through, and even went with him and his mother to a school in the west side Austin community to talk to staff there. She was a former student of mine in the '70s. Apparently my visit did help him. He also said "Whenever I got in trouble, he gave me advice, and put me on the right path. His ... philosophy was you do good, and good will come back. For every action there's a reaction. So, you better watch what you do. He taught me to be me and not go with the crowd" And what really surprised me as his teacher – "What really hit me hard was that he cared for the students, as if they were his own children. He would bend the rules for a student to get ahead."

What was interesting about this that he wrote this essay for the Central West Community Organization about 'Why are seniors important to the Community.' There is the beauty here of being a 'nice character', and being part of a community that stretches from Evanston to the Horners and into Austin.

Oh yes, Darnell Williams also received an award of \$75.00 in that Voices of Wisdom Essay Contest for that story. They gave him a monetary award and he gave me a teacher's reward.

And here it was again... "he cared for the students as if they were his own children."

Many teachers at Dett School had that dedication to their children.

V# 85 How Often Will You Let Other People Control Your Life? -

It was about this time that I taught a summer science course at the YMCA High School on west Wacker Drive just west of Wells Street. The first day of class brought students from every part of Chicago. They were making up a failed course in their high school or getting future credit for graduation. After taking attendance I began my lesson. A young light skinned student stood in the back of the room and wouldn't sit down. I said nothing to him because of the challenging stance he assumed. It was obvious he was making a statement. That didn't bother me, but it did make me refocus my method of instruction for this group of high schoolers. He was my biggest challenge. I felt that if I could reach him, then the rest of the class would fall under the same umbrella. So, he became my focus, and I was teaching him without looking at him, or addressing him directly. If he felt it was a learning experience, perhaps he would let slide that chip from his shoulder and sit down.

The variety of the students was good in that they didn't know each other, and they were all on an equal footing. There were no groups or baggage from their previous schools. It was to my advantage in that I had a captive audience, because they came to me for a course that they needed.

The first two days went well. I taught. They listened and questioned. By the third day the young man in the back sat down in the back row. By the second week he was in the third row, and a few days later, he was in the front row. It was a good summer program and seemed to pass quickly. At the end of the program, I talked to all the students individually about their work and grades. I explained to my focus student that he earned a 'B', and the reason why he just missed an 'A'. I then asked him why he was in the summer school program, because he was such a bright student. He said that he didn't like the science teacher in his school, and therefore, had to repeat the class with me. I said to him that he had spent extra money, travel time from the south side and missed other options for the summer. I then asked him how often in his future, he would let other people control his life. He had a surprised look on his face. He thanked me and said goodbye.

My unspoken message to him was that we need wisdom in dealing with those who wish to control us, and to control ourselves in dealing with others. Focus on your goal and don't be diverted by others. I think he got some of that.

V# 86 It Takes a Village or Two -

She came into my room before the entry bell rang and told me that she had a boy she wanted in my classroom the next school year. She was Ms. Turner, a fifth-grade teacher across the hall. She was also the one I told Dr. Ferris to 'get off her back' because she was one of our best teachers. This was near the end of the school year in May. She extolled the virtues of this boy and that she would see to it that he would be one of my students in September. That was a surprise announcement and I felt honored that she wanted him under my tutelage, even though I had no knowledge of the boy. It struck me also that there was something else in her wanting him in my room. It was like she was passing on a little treasure. I of course said yes, and then wondered what the next year would bring.

The first day of school the following September, before the entrance bell sounded, a small fellow was at the door. He said good morning and asked if he could come in. He introduced himself, and I realized that it was the young lad that Millie mentioned the previous semester. I assented. After talking a bit, I told him to look around while I prepared for the rest of the new class.

He went to the back of the room and spent some time looking over the 17inch X 15foot chart taped across the wall. It was 'The Wall Chart of World History.' After looking it over for a while he went to the beginning of the chart and asked a question, "Mr. McCarthy, who came first, Adam and Eve or the cavemen?" I said to myself, "Thank you Millie, I think this is going to be a good year." It was!

However, during that year a great deal transpired. Family problems brought a county social worker to my classroom advising that he would be leaving our school to live with a foster family, in a different neighborhood. When some other faculty members learned of this, they immediately got involved in keeping this young lad in our school. We knew the circumstances regarding the family and didn't want to lose him. Personally, I called the social worker at her home and had a long conversation with her, the essence of which was that Dett School was his home, and he should not be transferred.

And then a godsend. One of our teachers took him in as a foster child to keep him in our school. She was Beaddie Williams, and she instantly became my heroine. She not only took him, but she also took his younger brother and sister as foster children. They were later my students, also. Although it was a sacrifice on her part, she did change the lives of three children for the better.

And again, it was a good year because of his quiet pleasant personality and intellect that added much to the classroom atmosphere. Little Kendell became part of the Dett family. He went on to the seventh and eighth grades and was a delight for that faculty.

V# 87 The Second Village – cont'd -

While he was in eighth grade, I was attending a computer math program at the University of Illinois's Circle Campus, just a mile from our school. During the class it was announced that a scholarship was offered to one of us for a week's math program in Cambridge, Massachusetts that would complement what we were covering. No one in the class was able to attend, so I took advantage of the opportunity and went to Cambridge.

I stayed at an Inn within walking distance of the program where other teachers from around the country were staying. I met a teacher at the Inn, Cyndi Broyer, from Fryeburg, Maine who lived in the town where Kendell would be going with a four-year high school scholarship. She was told about him and was impressed with his background. She said that she would like to meet him. After graduating from our school, he and Beaddie flew to Maine and were greeted at the airport by Cyndi and driven to her community. His residence was at the private Fryberg Academy. However, during the four years he became very close with the Broyer family.

From there he went on with a scholarship to Poly Tech College. I flew there for his graduation and met two other teachers, John and Jackie Roper. We went to the graduation together. Kendell was a success story with two villages supporting him. He was able to do it by himself academically, he just had concerned people along the way who made sure that no doors were closed to him.

It all started on Chicago's west side at the Dett Village and ended at the Fryeburg Village on the East Coast.

Destiny seems to have been a part of this because of this unusual occurrence that seemed to have directed me to meeting Cyndie in Cambridge. There was such a long bridge between the two villages, that it had to be predestined.

V# 88 Pimphood – Sainthood -

How does a young boy go from plans of pimphood to praying with sainthood? Well, in class I had to ride his butt constantly to keep him on track. It was from classroom work, homework, taking school seriously to other things long forgotten. He was in my class for the first years of my teaching. As much as I pressured him, he was respectful. I've found out in many cases that sincerity in teaching may foster differences in opinions, but it can also foster mutual respect. Then one day he'd had enough. He told me bluntly that all this schoolwork wasn't important, because in the future he was going to be a pimp and make a lot more money than I was making as a teacher. There was no doubt about a pimp making more money than a teacher, but I kept on his butt as long as he was under my tutelage.

I hadn't heard much about him after that, until a two-page article in the Sunday Sun-Times on September 4, 2016 had his picture. No, not as a pimp. The article was captioned MOTHER TERESA IN CHICAGO with a half page picture of her and next to her a smaller picture of Demetrius with his large caption that 'SHE'S WATCHING OVER ME'. He says Mother Teresa would be proud of how he changed after their 1985 meeting.' There was another caption on the next page that read: "SHE GRABBED MY HANDS IN HERS AND EVERYTHING GOT QUIET. AND THAT WAS LIKE THE CHANGING POINT IN MY LIFE...AT THAT MOMENT I JUST FELT BETTER."

This all occurred at St. Malachy's Church which was across the street and a half block south of our school. A priest at the church gave him work doing odd jobs from cooking, cleaning and handy work around the rectory. In 1985 Mother Teresa was visiting the church as four nuns were recently assigned there. They were there at the request of a parish priest who had written her asking for her help. While waiting at the base of the stairs with a priest, she came down and grabbed his hand and said, "Let me pray for you." And he said in reply, "Wow, you know I need to be praying for you." She then grabbed both his hands.

"And that was like the changing point in my life" he said. There were many awful things going on in his life, but she brought him relief. The last sentences in the article were, "When you touch someone's hand and they are praying for you, it's a connection that cannot be broken. Her spirit will always be with me."

While on the West Side in September 2019 and being driven past my closed and vacant former school, there was Demetrius on the sidewalk. A surprise for both of us. We hugged and talked for quite a while. She, Mother Teresa, is gone now, but her imprint is on Chicago's West Side.

I had nothing to do with his transformation; however, the above was all a pleasant surprise for me.

V# 89 39 ½ -

How it all started I'm not sure, but age always seems to be either an embarrassment or a point of pride with people. To me it was just another reality that creeps upon us while we are too busy to notice. 39 was a good year, but Jack Benny claimed that one. I went to 39 ½ and have stuck with it well beyond its reality. My students accepted it – with a sideways glance. It was May, which is my birth month, and my students trying to keep a secret from me was quite humorous. Their whispering, backward glances at me, their giggles and excitement of ‘somethings up’ permeated the classroom for days. The event climaxed with cooperation from a few teachers who got me out of the classroom so my students could prepare it for a party. When I returned it was to the shouts of surprise for my 39 ½ birthday party. It was then that I realized that my students in reality were party animals. It fit right into my style – work hard, party hard. It was a good party but then interrupted twice. First by Ranessa raising her hand and declaring:

“Mr. McCarthy, you can't be 39 ½.

“And why is that, Ranessa?”

“Because you were 39 ½ when you taught my mother!”

The class loved that one.

“Tell me Ranessa, do you plan to go to 7th grade?”

“Yes, Mr. McCarthy and you certainly are 39 ½.”

“Thank you, Ranessa!”

I thought that might have settled my age question. But no! Next it was Charice's turn, and she went to the front of the class and requested everyone's attention.

“And especially you Mr. McCarthy. Something is not right about this 39½ business.”

Going to the chalkboard she wrote out my age and with her excellent mathematical wizardly skills of subtraction concluded, after figuring years of elementary and high school plus my years of teaching and other activities of my life, that I was 12 years of age when I graduated from college... and that just didn't seem right. Therefore, I had some explaining to do her. That was easy...

... she needed help with her math.

V# 90 39 ½ Again and Again

Well, of course, I explained it away. I must have done a good job because the next year they gave me another surprise party for my 39½th. We were together again because they moved on to 7th grade, and after about a dozen years as a 6th grade teacher, I was moved up to be the 7th and 8th grade social studies teacher. It was like a mutual admiration relationship. We worked hard together, and my classroom was like

a second home. I looked forward to seeing that class and struggling with them through that teaching/learning process.

The following year was our last year together as they were in 8th grade, and I would retire with their graduation. I taught for two generations and thirty years in the Horners. The grandchildren were coming, so it was time for me to move on. A final surprise for them was a social studies field trip to St. Louis, Missouri. We had studied the Dred Scott case in our classroom and were going to reenact the courtroom drama, in the same courtroom where the original trial took place. This was where the slave Dred Scott (?1795-1858) born in Southampton County, Virginia, had tried to obtain his freedom on the ground that he lived in Illinois, a free state. The Supreme Court ruled against him in this case (1848-1857), although he was soon emancipated. He then lived in St. Louis and worked as a hotel porter. The state agency allowed us to use that landmark courthouse for the reenactment of the trial.

The students had different roles for each historical figure in the trial of Dred Scott, judge, jury, attorneys etc. It was well rehearsed in our classroom before hand, and the trial went well in St. Louis. It was a wonderful trip from the trial to the top of the Arch and other worthy sites.

My surprise for them was lunch on a McDonald's barge floating on the Mississippi River. It was that time again. When the teachers and students were all seated, I announced another 39½th. My present to all was a treat of a lunch from whatever was on the menu.

My last three years ended well...

...at their graduation!

Famous Last One-Liners -

Steve W. – “Yeah, but you know what I mean.”

Charice J. – “Do I have to answer these Critical Thinking questions? They’re busting my head.

Ranisha J. – After three minutes of talking, she said: “Now I do know how to say it. (Pause, pause, pause...) Well, you know what I mean.”

Antionette S. – After a measured pout – “Never mind.”

Albert – “Yes, I brought my sister Korless to school. She came by CTA with me dragging her. (Or was it the other way around?)

Ranisha – “Mr. McCarthy, you’re not fair.

Timothy P. – The second day of school. “Am I passing?”

Mercedes – After running from the room because she couldn’t get her way I exposed my wrist counting 1. 2. 3. 4 ... and quick as a flash she burst back in the room. “Please Mr. McCarthy, don’t call Mr. White (the school’s disciplinarian.) That totally cracked up the class and put a smile on my face.

Section 9 - The Underbelly of Our Educational System... Institutional Racism

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy –

These children can't learn!

Therefore, why try to teach them?

They failed the tests.

See, I told you that they can't learn!

(I certainly can't teach them as if they were my own children.

They are certainly different.)

“How can you teach these niggers?!” -

I was about to enter the office to check my mail when two police officers came in the main entrance. One went directly to the office and the other stayed in the hall looking around. He saw me and very casually said, “How can you teach these niggers?!” He walked away not wanting an answer. His statement hit me in the gut. It was disgusting, but not a surprise knowing the problems the residents of the Horner's were having with the police, as explained above in the Introduction about the assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

That gut reaction gave me an immediate flashback to my military service at Ft. Benning, Georgia in 1956. We had just finished jump school. There were three of us who had become friends through the three weeks of training to be paratroopers. We were serving with the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; although we trained at Ft. Benning. I'll never forget that first jump after the grueling training we'd gone through. It was the most exciting and thrilling experience up to that point in my life. The jolt of the chute opening, and then the suspension of our bodies by the silk cords (risers), as if we were puppets on strings, is unforgettable. We swung back and forth and were laughing and yelling as we floated back to earth. We were also cursing with exhilaration. After we landed the sergeant chewed us out. We didn't know that there was a reviewing stand full of dignitaries, including women, and they could hear everything we were yelling. We learned quickly how well sound travels through the air when you are above ground. We were comrades in arms or chutes. We reveled that day, and then went to continue our celebration in the little town close to the base that evening. It was Phenix, Alabama, a town that sticks in my craw. We entered that town in uniform full of comradely joy. My comrades were Joe of North Dakota and six-foot Napoleon from Harlem, New York. There was a tavern on a corner, and I suggested we have a beer. Napoleon demurred, and said “No.” “Well, how could we not celebrate together?!” I insisted, so he said “Okay,” with apprehension. I was oblivious to his hesitation. Over his objections we went in and sat at the bar. The bartender came over and asked what we wanted. I said to set up three beers. He looked me right in the eyes and said, “I can serve you and him, but

not that nigger in the middle.” It totally shocked me. I was almost speechless, but I did say something with disgust in my voice. We turned to leave as two uniformed policemen entered the door, apparently to support the bartender in getting us out of there. I was embarrassed for Napoleon, so much so that I remember that episode to this day. He, of course, knew the situation in the south better than I. That reality has never left me. Wherever you are Napoleon, please, as I asked you then, forgive me for my youthful ignorance.

Ever since then, when I’m asked about my military service I say, “I’m a member of the VFW (Veteran of Foreign Wars). I served in three foreign countries, Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama.”

The overlying question for my school community, and our society is, “How does one deal with this cop who visited our school and others like him?” My first instinct was to chastise him, but I knew it would not be wise. His badge would have given him power over me, as it had over the community. He and others like him were to “serve and protect” (the white power structure and its institutions). Sadly, this system still exists today in overt and implicit racism.

It was getting hit in the gut again, as when our six-year-old adopted son comes home from an afternoon supervised park program in Chicago and asks me, “Dad, what’s a nigger?” This history of racism has repeated and perpetuated itself and this cop is a good example of this. If he has children, they will learn it first-hand. And trying to explain it to others is quite difficult. Some feel uncomfortable listening to it, as if it would go away by not confronting it. Since it doesn’t affect them, how or why could or would they understand or even be interested. So easy for someone to insult but outraged when being insulted. To me, this degradation inflicted on others defines the name caller as the term used. The ‘Whites Only’ signs in those windows should actually read ‘White Niggers Only.’

“No ‘Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag’ “ -

Since I was a Special Reading teacher for my first dozen or so years, I did not have a home room class. When I did become a classroom teacher, I could not start the day with the ‘Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.’ It was the DNA of the pledge, which are the words, *with liberty and justice for all*, and means - Does Not Apply. It doesn’t apply in this country and certainly not to the West Side of Chicago, where my teaching career was evolving.

Those words are still in my ears: “How can you teach these niggers?” As I would question the behavior of my students, who were doing or saying something inappropriate, I would have to ask the same question of the above police officer. Was he a bad cop, just evil, or did he just lack a moral compass? What were the pressures on him and the officers around him? How was he raised to think that way? Was it from his parents? And now, after these many years since, would he feel the same? No doubt he would, as everything we do comes from our past experiences and

environment. Are the pressures that surround us so overwhelming that doing right is not an option or even conceivable? It makes me wonder if my great grandfather, Captain John Fox of the Chicago Police Department, could have said such a thing.

If this is evil, then who does it apply to? Does it apply to cops upholding the unwritten laws of institutional racism, or to the blacks, like the Black Panthers of that period, standing by and for their community? And quite importantly, where do the societal workers, such as teachers, social workers, etc. fit, in the inner city? Think of the many cultures that intermix in a city like Chicago. Where do teachers of multiple 2nd and 3rd European generational backgrounds fit in a black community? How does this affect the children? I had to use the same analytical process, when students got out of line with their attitude or behavior. It's like the girl who insulted me in the "I don't understand?" anecdote in Part I. What made that student say that? What triggered it? Was she raised that way, like that cop was? Perhaps we can see part of the answers in the following.

Eurocentrism

Eurocentrism is a political term coined in the 1980s which refers to the notion of European exceptionalism, or superiority of the white Western nations. This is a world view centered on Western civilization, as it had developed during the height of the European colonial empires starting in the Early Modern period. These European conquests from the 15th through 18th centuries dealt with most of the known world at that time. One aspect of this exceptionalism was slavery, which started here in the United States, in the 1600s. This was well before we were a nation.

The residual effects of slavery have trickled down to this day, in a unique form of American *terrorism*. It became the fabric of our society and in the context of this journal, it is institutional racism in education. From its founding, our nation has been overlaid with this Euro Centric concept. This European, white superiority, dominant mentality complex, can explain the bridge between our white structured society and the fringe minorities. This leads one, I hope, to better understand why there is a learning gap between minority students and those with Euro Centric DNA. This, of course, has been perpetuated by too many teachers with this European heritage.

Today, because of all the examples of minority (Black) achievements in the arts, local and national politics, sports and entertainment, we see improvements in minority education. However, there is a long way to go for total inclusion of all minorities in our society. There is the reality that in the not-so-distant future, there will be a 'majority of minorities' in this country. Unfortunately, there are today roughly one thousand extremist/supremacist hate groups in this country. They will always be around, as they are throughout the world. There is still the tail of racism that wags our society off balance. Monitoring these hate groups should be a greater priority for every state. Therein lies a problem for a white teacher, teaching in the inner city. Some feel instinctively that their charges are unteachable and will never or should never be

their equal. Then the question looms: Who should teach these children? And then, who should teach the teachers children? And some day can we teach them all the same? Can we someday say as in our Pledge Allegiance... Equality and justice for all?

Parallel Paths -

This journal was started because of my teaching experiences on the West Side of Chicago, but it would not be complete if I didn't explain the two worlds I was straddling. One was a father in Evanston, and the other a teacher in Chicago. The two meshed in an unsettling manner. What appeared to be a homogenous community here in Evanston began to emit an awareness of underlying racial prejudices. This had a great impact on my wife and I because of the impact it was having on our newly adopted son.

When moving to Evanston in 1972, I had no knowledge of the history of *de facto* segregation and the city's racist past until it affected us personally. It didn't apply to our home on Main Street, U.S.A., but it did influence us through our son's school on Main Street, U.S.A. This term Main Street, U.S.A. may sound simplistic, but it resonated with me. One weekend in the fifties I went to a party here in Evanston on the corner of Main and Ridge. After the party I stood on the sidewalk in the darkness and said to myself, "Sooo, this is Main Street, U.S.A." I only said it because for years I'd seen that address in wallets being sold, with that I.D. of 1234 Main St., U.S.A. on the inside flap. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that one day, in the distant future, I would have a 90-year-old home on this Main Street, U.S.A., just two blocks west of where I was standing in '72. It was 118 years old when we sold it in 1999.

Then it was in 1958 that the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. gave a speech here in Evanston, at the Beth Emmet Jewish Synagogue. He slept in the basement of the synagogue that night, because no hotels in Evanston would allow blacks to register for rooms. Later, in 1967 The Rev. King was planning a march on the real estate offices which practiced housing discrimination along Irving Park and Kedzie Avenue in Chicago, just a few blocks from where we lived in the 3700 block of Spaulding Avenue. This was in my senior year at North Park College. At Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, just half a block from our apartment, our Bishop Wysislo was conducting one of his weekly evening block meetings with parishioners next door to our residence. The meeting was in session upon my arrival where my neighbors were vociferously denouncing the expected visit by Rev. King. After too many minutes of this talk there was a lull. Quietly I suggested a solution to the problem, "Let's invite the Rev. King to the social center in our church for coffee and cookies to discuss his concerns." There was about 10 seconds of total silence. Then all hell broke loose

from my Catholic neighbors. Every racist term in use at the time was spewed out. When the noise subsided, I addressed the bishop, and asked him if this could be done. He demurred saying that it wouldn't be feasible. It was quite disappointing to me on two fronts. First, most of my neighbors had shown their true colors, and secondly, it disappointed me with our bishop's response of meeting with Dr. King of 'not being feasible.' I heard that he had accomplished a great deal of work in rebuilding the lives of people in Poland after the Second World War, but here, he could do nothing for the lives of colored people possibly moving into this neighborhood. After the meeting only two of my neighbors queried what they could do to make things better. My popularity was quite low with the other neighbors. In fact, that Sunday at church, as I was going to the altar for communion, the owner of the building where that meeting was held was coming from the altar. When she saw me, she suddenly flashed hatred in her eyes just moments after receiving the Eucharist - in her mouth. I certainly didn't expect the injustices of racism to follow me anymore... they did! I was quite disappointed by Bishop Wysislo's response but then it wasn't any different from Chicago's Archbishop Cody's dealing with Rev. King in 1966. "The first march went into Gage Park, on the far Southwest Side. Many of the people in Gage Park had formerly lived in Englewood, Woodlawn, and other areas that had slowly turned black. They were Lithuanian, Polish, Italian in ancestry. They were blue collar in occupation, and they were haters. It was an ugly event. King was hit in the head with a rock. The bump was headlined around the world." "Two days later, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, the marchers went into Cragin, another bungalow section on the far Northwest Side. King had taken ill, but the other civil rights leaders were there, along with a large turnout of priest and nuns. Cragin is a heavily Catholic area, with many Poles and Italians, but that didn't keep the nuns and priests from getting a face full of spit." ... "King's people said that was just the beginning. They were going to hold not one, but two, maybe three, marches a day, ..." "The white neighborhoods were furious, and much of their anger was directed at Daley. He had given the rioting blacks swimming pools, now the police were beating homeowning whites. The city's establishment joined in, expressing disapproval of the new tactic. Even Archbishop Cody, who had earlier supported King's goals and demands, paying the price with sharply reduced Sunday collections in the backlash neighborhoods, now joined the chorus of those asking King to desist and get himself back to the good old conference table. James Bevel, one of King's men snapped back: When there's trouble, Daley sticks up his liberal bishop to say, 'You've gone far enough.' Well, we've got news for

the man. If the archbishop doesn't have the courage to speak up for Christ, let him join the devil." ¹.Boss, Mike Royko, A Plume Book p.156-57

Side Note to Institutional Racism

CPD Telephone Tapping -

It was before the event when the police officer that questioned me outside of the school office, which was 'How can you teach these niggers?' that I attended evening classes, 1974-76, at Northeastern Illinois University studying for a master's degree at the now named Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS) at 700 E. Oakwood in Chicago. When I began my classwork there it was just The Center for Inner City Studies.

Well, it was during one class session during a discussion with other students that it came out that all our telephones were being tapped. It was certainly a surprise to us. We brought this to the attention of our instructor who then advised us that it was the CPD (Chicago Police Department's Red Squad) that was tapping our phones. All of us were teachers in the Inner City of Chicago mainly teaching in Black communities or Black projects. I was one of the minorities in the class, but all of us were being tapped.

A question I've pondered since is why we were considered a threat to society that our phones would be tapped. Since we all taught in the inner city, perhaps we were walking in the footsteps of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in trying to make the inner city a better place for families, and especially children. The telephone tapping didn't seem much different than J. Edgar Hoover's memo above, "... it is immaterial whether facts exist to substantiate the charge."

There were many discussions about this at that time but teaching during the day and taking classes at night at the Center did not leave time to pursue the reason for this invasion of our/my privacy. During various discussions at the time one thought was that it was because some of us, or one of us knew someone that the Red Squad were interested in. That is, they weren't watching us because of us, but perhaps because of somebody that we knew that they wanted to know more about. It was certainly a wide net the CPD threw if it included the student body and faculty. All I heard about in my first year of teaching at Dett was the breakfast program that the BBP had started near my school while my wife and I were in Panama.

For this journal it seemed about time to find out what the true reason was for the phone tapping. I filled out a FOIA request form asking for a copy of 'my file' and 'the reason my phone had been tapped.' The response to this request came rather quickly

in just about two weeks at the end of February 2020. It advised that the CPD does not have an existing report that contains the information from my request. It then goes on for ten lines of about 150 words of a convoluted reasoning why the CPD have no responsive records to my request. And added, was that I do have the right of review by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor in Springfield, IL. and I may also seek judicial review. Since there were no redacted records, it probably means there just wasn't anything worthwhile to keep or there were just working notes that were disposed of. If there was anything worthwhile there would be a record. That's just all history now, and there would be no reason for me to carry this any further.

Interestingly for me while studying at the Center it began to feel like I was entering the 'Belly' of Chicago. It was like Chicago was pregnant with twins. Of course, this city of my birth is large enough for a birth canal that could cover both the West and South sides. If ever there was a kicking pregnancy, it's been in these separate canals as if by fraternal twins. Identical twins wouldn't seem to apply because of the various deprecations inflicted on both sides of the city since its founding. And yes, the new designation of the Center honoring Dr. Carruthers is indeed appropriate. His was the first class I attended, and it almost overwhelmed me until I caught up with myself. It was both exciting and frightening for me, a neophyte in a new world, although those two and a half years in the bowels of the community in Panama, did warm me up for a new adventure on my 'Way.' That community which grew out of Africa and was rudely transported to the shores of a new world did change my world. And then there was an adoption that previously never entered my mind. After that a teaching position on Chicago's West Side. It seemed that Dr. Carruthers and that master's program is what was needed for me to begin a new chapter in my life.

This Institutional Racism is very insidious and very difficult or confusing to understand. This is because it permeates our society without the white society able to see it, except those who perpetuate this racism. It's what is called the 'blame the victim' syndrome. Those who perpetuate racism say it is the fault of the black person or black community i.e., blaming the victim for what happened to them.

Let us look at who and how the cause of all racism has to do with the institutions in our free democratic society. These include our state and federal governments, the court systems, our banking, financial and real estate institutions, white Christian churches, education from the primary level up and through the university systems, and of course, local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. In other words, racism encompasses our total society.

Since the beginning of slavery our black people and black communities have been terrorized and it continues to this day. Our Constitution sided it because the southern states with their plantations would not sign the Constitution if slavery was eliminated. The biggest national legal farce in the Constitution was considering the Black Man as 3/5th a man, wherein their masters could legally vote for their slaves i.e., 3/5th times

the number of slaves. The terrible Civil War two centuries later ended slavery officially, and then 101 years later President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act; however, still today we are confronted with institutional and implicit racism. Johnson's signing happened within my lifetime. I then felt that justice was finally taking hold in this country. It especially felt good for the south because justice would prevail there as it didn't when I was there in the army in the mid '50's. Once again, my naivete came through when the southern Democratic members of congress switched to the Republican Party. They just did not want civil rights for their former slaves. They became the Dixiecrats. They were and still are our homespun Terrorists. The Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups got their license to continue their terrorism. Unfortunately, today in the 2020s there are still 'Whites Only' establishments here in Evanston, only without the signs. Also, throughout this country there are 6,172 White Supremist Groups as of 2022. SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center)

Section 10 Evanston's True Compass Bearings

However, it was in putting this journal together that the past started to make sense. It was in Mary Barr's book Friends Disappear, 'The Battle for Racial Equality in Evanston', (The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London 2014) that I came across a better understanding of Evanston's true compass bearings. Perhaps the following will shed light on this reality:

Race and class diversity shaped this early suburb. Founding fathers espoused principles of Methodism, including abolitionism and prohibition, while subtly excluding blacks from the political and social spheres. Whites monopolized the lakefront for luxury homes and recreational activities. They pushed blacks to vacant land hidden from view, near industry and a sanitary (sewage) canal. Separation was reinforced through street circulation, racial covenants, and zoning policies ensuring that there was little social interaction between racial groups. A white privileged class enjoyed economic advantage working as professionals in Chicago's loop during the day, retreating to comfortable homes at night. A black working class serviced wealthy lifestyles that placed white women at the center of the domestic sphere. A nonpartisan city government consisted of a mayor and eighteen aldermen, but Evanston was a solidly Republican town until Lyndon B. Johnson carried it in 1964. Barr .p. 255

Segregated diversity was celebrated. There were two Evanston's, one white and one black. There were separate hospitals. There were two YMCAs. Religious institutions were also segregated. There were many churches, but no synagogues until 1964, when Beth Emmet was built. The elementary schools were also racially divided. Whites were not openly hostile but viewed blacks in patronizing terms and would not have considered them social equals. Advancement did not come because of the intense involvement of whites. Ibid p.256

“The security of the class system was puzzling given the resources of good schools, social services, and exposure to middle-class values available to residents living in an affluent suburb. Outwardly at least, it seemed that everyone would benefit, but Evanston’s wealth didn’t seem to make a difference for poor and working-class blacks. . . . Moreover, affluent members could not fall from their place of privilege, no matter how many mistakes they made. Environment had nothing and everything to do with life chances. The paucity of social mobility as well as the fixed placement of the elite reaffirmed racial hierarchies.”^{Ibid p.9}

And what was needed to cement this segregated system was - “Coded language disguises underlying racist practices. *De facto* segregation suggested that inequalities were both accidental and unavoidable, and therefore outside the reach of the Fourteenth Amendment.” (Declared covenants unconstitutional). As a legal doctrine, *de facto* the term means “innocent segregation.” (Covenants referred to the insidious contracts that existed between realtors to sell housing, bankers to provide mortgages, and homeowners. It meant that those buying a home in Evanston, had to sign a covenant or contract that they would never sell their home to a Jewish or Black family.) School districts were organized using a “neighborhood model,” an innocuous term connoting community and tradition rather than racial exclusion. As a result, student bodies were either all white or all black. Local politicians employed a less pejorative term, “racial imbalance,” when referring to enrollment figures. Opponents of integration hoped to stir up fears about individual rights that were quashed by a dictatorial government, when they used the expression “forced busing.” Residential segregation was explained away as a product of “individual preference” and “free market forces,” not as being caused by a discriminatory real-estate industry and racial preferences of white owners. ^{Ibid p. 20}

Using racial covenants and zoning policies, suburbs sealed themselves off from groups they didn’t want as neighbors during the mid-twentieth century. Many communities that line Chicago’s north shore still exemplify this trend. ^{Ibid p. 15} It wasn’t until September 7, 1967 that 10,000 elementary and junior high school students were integrated in 20 schools for the first time in Evanston. At that time I had just obtained my first teaching position in Chicago at the Jirka Elementary School where I met principal Ms. Joan Ferris.

We, of course, knew nothing of the above racist history of Evanston regarding the educational system, housing and Northwestern University’s role in all of this. There was. . . “an even deeper fissure between what’s said about Evanston, and what, really happens, there. The city rests on and reproduces racial inequality and injustice, but most don’t want to know about it.” ^{Ibid. p. 255}

Another surprise for me was Northwestern University. In the mid-50s a close friend was a student there and we walked the campus on various occasions. Overt racism was not evident anywhere. That was the *de facto* part of a false persona of the Evanston community. A true picture of this community was brought out with a

comparison of Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois) and Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut) in the following section.

“(The Universities) ... shared something more destructive, than their similarities of age, architecture, city grid and racial diversity. In both cities racism serves as an organizing principle for residential areas, educational opportunities, and occupational stratification. In both cities a privileged white neighborhood is located alongside a poor black community, and the territorial margins of these locales are typified by interaction between middle-class whites and black service workers.” *Ibid* p. 3,4

Unbeknownst to most: “Black students at Northwestern had endured discrimination and insults for years without coordinated protests in response. That changed when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968.” Two student groups, For Members Only (FMO) and the Afro-American Student Union (AASU) took over Northwestern’s bursar’s office on May 3, 1968. This was the nerve center of the university since their new computers, controlled payroll and records for the undergraduate college in Evanston and their professional schools in Chicago. After two days of negotiations the officials agreed to most of the student requests. And most interesting was that they stated: “Northwestern admits that for most of its history it has been a racist institution.” *Ibid*. p. 203-4

Northwestern’s practices were especially egregious. -

““Property owners routinely failed to bring their building up to code. Northwestern’s practices were especially egregious. The university’s growth and expansion contributed to the housing shortage by displacing residents when housing was razed to make room for new construction. In one such case, ninety families were evicted when Northwestern began construction on a graduate housing center. The university was collecting income from vast property holdings throughout the city but was exempt from municipal, state, and federal taxes, not giving back to the community from which it was gaining. In a black neighborhood on the west side of Maple Avenue, university-owned property consisted of “dilapidated, slummy-looking structures which the university has neglected to keep in good repair.” The apartments could only be described as “social blight as evidenced by two recent fires.””

Northwestern University called Slumlord.” *North Shore Examiner* 2, no. 14 (February 1970)

The city’s policy of demolishing low-cost housing for the poor in order to build parks and playgrounds for the middle class came to a fore in November 1969. ... Low-income blacks were paying the price for city parks. NAW (Neighbors at Work) pointed to a 1944 report titled “Evanston Housing – Some Facts, Some Problems” as evidence that the city had historically made a conscious effort to segregate. Published by the committee on postwar planning, the report revealed the motivation behind park acquisitions: “In considering the matter of parks, the committee has had in mind not only the use of park areas as recreational facilities, but also their use as ‘buffers’ or ‘green area.’” The report elaborated on the committees’ true intentions: “areas might

be acquired as buffer strips between different localities, and...in certain instances, the acquiring of such buffer strips might be worth many times their cost in the preventing of the spread of blight and other deterioration in certain neighborhoods.” This approach was utilized in 1963 when the Evanston Planning Commission acquired additional parklands to “suit specific needs of the areas they serve.” The language of the report was purposefully vague, but it was clear that “preventing spread” and “certain neighborhoods” were references to the black community. Barr, p. 190-91

Parallel Reality

I didn't see nor taste racism, but I started to feel it through my son, via the Evanston educational system as mentioned above. In 1993 the city was more accurately described by sociologist Ruth Frankenberg's term *quasi integrated*. P. 21

For example, when we moved to Evanston, our son entered 2nd grade at Central School on Main Street, USA as mentioned above. After a few weeks in school, his whole demeanor changed. Before that, his first grade was in a small parochial school, on the north side of Chicago. He attended that school after we arrived from Panama in '71. My wife and I were concerned that perhaps he started school at a disadvantage because of being in a new country. We were quite uncertain how he would adjust, as we had just come from the “bush” to a large city environment. In a very short time, he adjusted well and became tops in the class. He ran to school every morning and absorbed everything. His teacher liked him, because of his rapid progress, and pleasant youthful personality.

At the new school in Evanston within days he started to stutter, his eyes blinked uncontrollably, and he didn't want to go to school. He made excuses every morning. This was totally unlike him. Of course, the problem had to be at school. My wife and I went and talked to the teacher. I queried about his having to read the simple 2nd and 3rd grade books, when he was reading my 5th and 6th grades books at home. These were books from my school on Chicago's west side where I was the Special Reading Teacher. She explained that he had to read all the 2nd and then 3rd grade books, before he could move on to anything higher. We explained that he was top in his 1st grade class in Chicago. She said that “Oh, he couldn't be the top student in her class, because little Susie over there was the smartest in the class. She has a high I.Q.” That said it all. (Second graders are not given I.Q. tests.) Being light skinned and transferred from a Chicago school, he was assigned to the bottom class at Central Elementary School. Apparently, there was no placement test nor a regard for 1st grade records from his previous school. His teacher couldn't see him as a high achieving student. He didn't fit her profile of a smart young student. We thanked her and went directly to the assistant principal. We explained our meeting with the teacher and told him we wanted our son out of that class immediately. He was in a different class the next day. He immediately stopped stuttering, his blinking stopped, and he

ran off to school in the morning again. He was moving along at his own pace and was doubled promoted at the end of that year.

This experience typifies what the organization FOCUS (Federation of Citizens for an Unsegregated Society) was concerned about. “Chief among the group’s worries was academic tracking, a practice of sorting students into classes based on presumed academic abilities. Tracking, FOCUS maintained, fosters educational discrimination and injustice by reducing the challenge and motivation for educational excellence.” Ibid, p. 202

School District 202 (High School) board members listened to this same issue four years earlier at Mt. Zion Baptist Church here in Evanston. That was in 1968. Our school visit was in 1972. Apparently, the message of FOCUS had not filtered down to schoolteachers or personnel in those four years. That 2nd grade teacher was not one to instill achievement goals in too many of her students. It was a while before we learned that the total school system had just been integrated six years prior to our arrival in Evanston.

The same scenario occurred at ETHS (Evanston Township High School) in the next anecdote.

There was still that reality when our son went to register at ETHS and a woman counseled him to take some easy courses. Again, this was the same experience at Central School for second grade and now again for high school—that ‘presumed academic abilities’ tracking. She may have been a volunteer to assist on a busy day. She didn’t have any idea about him or his records from his middle school. If she was talking to him as a staff member, she was terribly prejudiced. She was probably following the protocol of the segregated system that had been part of the high school before my son arrived. She was apparently being nice to a boy, whom she felt wouldn’t be able to handle any difficult courses.

He did finally register with the proper person. This one had his records from middle school, and he was assigned to all honors classes. His first year went well with excellent grades and such; however, in the second week of his sophomore year we talked about his new honor classes, but he skirted around discussing the Chem/Phys classes. When prodded about them, he finally told us that the chemistry class was fine, and the instructor was good. The physics class was another issue. He didn’t have a chair or a desk. When we asked if he was the only student of color in the class, he affirmed it. The next morning my wife and I were conferring with the principal of his school, as to what was transpiring in that class. He said that he would take care of it. A desk and chair were provided that day. That physics teacher was retired in two weeks. Again, it must be remembered that the high school had just been integrated a few years earlier.

Ah yes, however, “The high school was integrated, if only because it was the only one in town. But students were re-segregated within a desegregated school. Instead of promoting social equality, the school reinforced social hierarchies by indoctrinating

children in culturally prescribed ways. The institution created racial difference and promoted segregation through semi-independent schools established to manage large enrollments. Blacks were made historically and socially invisible in the curriculum, and all the students were divided and sorted by race and class through academic tracking.”

Ibid, 198-9

Our son was reluctant to relate most of his experiences dealing with racism. Most of the time it was below him to deal with such nonsense, and generally walked away from remarks or taunts. He was physically strong, and inflicted punishment on those who pushed him too far. However, we did realize that there was something not right in his total school experiences as other issues had been occurring that befuddled us. Again, a colleague at my school, who had met him on the several occasions, recommended we see a black psychiatrist on north Michigan Avenue, in Chicago. She felt that perhaps he could be of help. It was about this time that other issues were occurring with our son that befuddled us. We sought out this psychiatrist for consultation and advice. He gave our son an I.Q. test, the results of which totally astonished us. After the test our son was advised that he could be anyone he wanted. His score was high enough to be a member of Mensa International. This organization is for anyone who scores in the top 2% of the population intellectually. He was in the top 1%. The doctor put it clearly, he could be a doctor, lawyer or even a bum. It was up to him. This certainly explained a great deal. It became apparent why he could breeze through assignments and exams. Also, why some teachers turned him off... because of ‘their’ lack of depth. What a crazy situation! We adopted a boy from the ‘bush’ of Panama because of his abundant energy and desire to learn, and we find that we have a genius. I certainly thanked my colleague, Mrs. Helen McClain for her insight in the recommendation of Dr. Kerr.

Our son had determined his destiny at the age of five. It was then in my wife’s Head Start class that he decided that he wanted to go back with us to America. His grandmother told that to me while we were walking and talking just a month or so before we came back to the U.S. She said that he had told his family over a year earlier that he wanted to go with ‘teacha’ and ‘Mr. Lahry’ when they went back to America. At first, adopting him was out of the question. My wife and I discussed the ramifications that we would be put through as a mixed family in Chicago. It was more my reluctance to adopt because of the harsh realities that the three of us would have to face. He, more so, because we couldn’t be with him 24/7 and protect him from the racist realities of our society. Although he was cute and eager to learn, would he be just another minority on society’s periphery? That concept was quite worrisome. My wife and I deliberated a great deal. It was his personality and spirit that won us over. We adopted him and the impact was immediate. We had to deal with much more than we imagined.

Revisit ELI -

An unexpected awareness was brought to my attention while attending an in-service meeting in the ELI (Educational Leadership Institute) as mentioned in Chapter I. All of us, principals, teachers and parents, were questioned about our backgrounds and different aspects of our lives. Then Dr. JoAnn Brown, president of the program, told me in a group meeting that I was a risk-taker. She was good at pointing out traits about the participants that may not have been obvious to them. Well, I didn't feel there was a risky aspect about me, because of my having been very careful in my various endeavors since being a teen. I asked her to explain what she meant. She said it was because we had adopted a Panamanian boy with an African heritage. Also, I had been a paratrooper, and then had hitchhiked for over half a year throughout Europe and into North Africa. Being a paratrooper was simple. Unbeknownst to me, and against my wishes, while in the army, orders were cut for me to go to OCS (Officers Candidate School) after my basic training. I circumvented those orders because I felt more comfortable jumping out of a plane for a year, than being an officer for 20 or 30 years. As mentioned above, being an officer was my father's dream. It had become more like my nightmare.

As far as knocking around Europe, it was a dream fulfilled. There were dangers I didn't expect, but I got through them. But she was correct. Adopting our son was a risk, but for whom? The reality turned out to be, that we had put our son at risk by bringing him into a racist society. There was not the racism in Panama as there was here, except with the Panama Canal Company and the United Fruit Company. Although years earlier I saw this racism in Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama in the mid '50s outside of Ft. Benning and Ft. Bragg, I didn't feel it until the reality of my son having to deal with it, first in Chicago when we returned with him from Panama when he was six years old, and then Evanston. His personality wouldn't let him be treated like anything less than he was. He phrased it quite well in a letter to me when he was an adult years ago. "Since I was not raised to be attuned to the subtleties of racism most things just pass over my head, which disarms people and results in them not having any 'buttons to push.' No one has ever prevented anything I desired as a result of how I looked." I'm sure that cop above would have said, "How could you adopt a nigger?" At least, that is what my wife's uncle said to me at a party, at 'our' house just a couple of years after we returned from Panama. He had too many Bushmills, and it gushed out of his lips, because it was certainly on his mind. Yes, disgust again. He forgot or didn't want to remember that which had once applied to 'himself' (an Irish term referring to a man in the family): 'Help wanted! Irish need not apply.'" My son fought the system of racism his own way, and at times did suffer for it. That's why for years I questioned myself if adoption was the right thing. It was tough. We adopted for the right reason but didn't truly understand the cruelty of our racist society. We suffered through his suffering. He's a man now and a husband, father, ER doctor and has gone through many more risks than me.

Seeing and knowing what he has gone through has made me wonder how I would have survived if I had been born black. I certainly could not have done all that I've accomplished. The doors would not have been open for me. The opportunities would not have been there because I would not have had that 'white privilege.'

The book "Chalk Talk" was dedicated to my son Dr. Samuel McCarthy O'Flaherty but there should also be an acknowledgment to all of my former students of R. Nathaniel Dett Elementary School; as well as, all the children raised in this country who are a shade 'off white.'" My doctor son has achieved a great deal in his life since opting to leave the 'bush' of Panama with his 'teacha' and 'Mr. Lahry' at the age of 5. However, the fact is that his accomplishments are eclipsed by what he had to overcome to do what he did. My students in the Horners had it worse. All Blacks and Browns must 'overcome' many more hurdles than their White contemporaries of like aptitudes and intelligences to gain what they do. If our White population had to face the hurdles they set for the colored populations, their achievements would be limited, and we would not be the country we think we are.

Being born and raised on the north side of Chicago took me away from the reality of the segregated ghettos of the West and South sides. Another reality struck me years later, after open housing legislation, that as a kid I saw black people getting off street cars on Broadway or buses on Sheridan Road, to work domestically in white homes, but now they are getting on buses on the north side to go to work downtown or wherever. What a crazy and good reality of the change that has taken place in my lifetime. Unfortunately, there still exists the reality that racism is alive and well in Chicago, Evanston and throughout the country.

Section 11 - Perseverance Wins the Day

The following will shed light on previous cases of racial discrimination here in Evanston. This is especially for those who should have been honor students in their day. These two men are examples of how black students were treated in the educational system before schools were integrated (and even after). They more importantly represent the tenacity, strength and courage it took to overcome the hurdles thrust upon Evanston's black community:

Bill Logan – Evanston Resident

“Not much prejudice in elementary school.”

“Probably the one that slapped me in the face the most was my experience at ETHS (Evanston Township High School) where I ran into so many prejudice teachers.”

>1st Black student to win the Myerson Award for football excellence.

>1st Black football Captain

>Senior Class Vice President

>Football Scholarship Western Illinois U. (In a prejudiced white town.)

>Korean War – Air Force 6 years. (Faced prejudice in Air Force for 4 years and for two years in Korea and Japan.)

>Hired by the police department (Old system – no blacks promoted, and they couldn’t patrol in white neighborhoods, except for emergencies.) There were 6 or 7 other black officers.

>Dr. MLK Jr.’s bodyguard in 1960’s. MLK told him to keep the faith and keep dreaming for the promotion that was so elusive.

>Encouraged he took police courses at four universities and passed the sergeants exam.

>First Black Sergeant.

>Lieutenant two years later.

>Captain two years later.

>First Deputy Chief 10 years later FBI Academy (Encountered racism from white police officers from around the country.)

>Chief of EPD (Evanston Police Department) in 1984.

>Retired 1987 * Conversation with Blacks in Evanston, Illinois, George W. Williams, Amer Literary Press, p.247

Sanders Hicks – Evanston Resident

Foster School 1933-1941. Left Evanston H. S. 1945 to go into military service, receiving a high school diploma upon his return in 1947. All the teachers at Foster School were white except Mr. Bouyer P.E. teacher. No homework assignments for eight years, he said, made him “ill-prepared for the demands of high school.” His intelligence kept him away from the “x” level designation, reserved mostly for Foster School graduates. (They received no preparation for high school or college.) Although he could not get into advanced level classes (in high school), a white math teacher recognized his skills and recommended him for trigonometry. The principal denied him. Upon appeal the school superintendent also denied him. He faced discrimination in the military, but hardened by his military experiences he learned not to take white’s prejudice personally. With his “enormous self-control, he was able to rise above it.”

More of this occurred when he applied to Evanston’s all white fire department. He placed last on a list of thirteen. The racist fire chief died shortly thereafter, and Sanders was selected to join the force in 1950. He was aided by the city manager who encouraged the hiring of black recruits. He was given the worst jobs and received ill treatment and isolation from the other fire fighters for seven years, until he was finally invited to eat with them and share recreational activities. They just didn’t think blacks would go into a burning building nor could they stay away from home for 24 hours. He put up with the racism as long as he wasn’t mistreated. Then a few more blacks were hired. He couldn’t join the union for 15 years. On the positive side he didn’t have to pay union dues for that time period but did receive all the benefits. He felt that his experience was no different than other blacks in integrated jobs.

He hung in there and was promoted to:

Captain in 1963.

Assistant Fire Chief in 1973.

Chief of EFD (Evanston Fire Department) in 1980.

Retired in 1987. *

*Perspectives in Black and White, Michael Frank Miles, Publisher: Lulu, p.100-01

Section 12 - Implicit Racism

Would the concept of Implicit Racism be understood, which is the inherent, understood and unquestioning knowledge that everyone other than Whites, are inferior? It is said that this is true without a doubt about it. That's why it would be quite difficult for Whites to walk in the shoes and footfalls of a Black person. Whites are not watched when they enter a store or walk down the street. Whites take for granted the freedom they must walk, talk and do whatever they want. We saw on TV and read about Blacks being shot for running away from police. So, do Whites understand how difficult it is for a Black guy to just jog the streets for exercise, and not be thought of as running away for having done something criminal.

Two examples of implicit racism were eye openers and exemplified by me both at my home in Evanston and the Horners. The first dealt with what I call 'my welfare mortgage.' In the 1970s I'd heard many times that those living in public housing in the projects were getting a good deal being on welfare with low or free rent. They were cheating the system and making the rest of us pay for it. When one hears something like that long and often enough then one can assume it is true. Assume is an interesting word, in that it can make an ass out of u and me! In the case of the public housing rents that was the case.

Here I had just bought a house on Main Street in Evanston. It was two stories with three bedrooms upstairs and full bath, and four rooms and half bath on the first floor, and a basement. It was on a lot 50' wide by 172' deep with a two-car garage and a rental cottage in the back. There were front, side and back yards. I was shocked to find out later that my mortgage payments were lower than what a family with mother, father and two children were paying in rent, in the Henry Horner Homes for their apartment. You figure it out.

And then the second example. A couple of years later I arrived early at school and there was a parking spot on Maypole Avenue just across the street from the main entrance. Great! Couldn't find a better and safer place to park than that. However, at the end of the school day and in my car, there was just silence, aside from the clicking sound when I turned the ignition key on. To my astonishment upon lifting the hood there was just a space where the battery should have been. My battery had been stolen in front of the school and nobody noticed. I couldn't believe it. What I had been warned about had happened. So, now what? How do I get home? Another teacher said that he could jump start my car and I could drive home, but don't let the motor die along the way. Well, the pedal was to the medal all those twelve agonizing miles up Western Avenue that afternoon.

What I had been warned about had happened. Queries flowed, "Why are you teaching there?" "It can be dangerous!" "You could be robbed." Etc, etc.

(Implicitly), that was in the projects and what was one to expect!? That is, until a year later when my car wouldn't start in the morning on my way to school. Again,

someone had stolen my battery overnight from my car, that was parked in the alley behind my house on that country-wide well known - Main Street.

That begged the question of the difference between my home neighborhood and my school neighborhood.

There's always been the question of why black people can't stand up, forget the past and move on with their lives. I believe it has been put in proper perspective from what was published by The Atlantic magazine, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/print/2014/06/home-is-where-the-hatred-is/373510/>. The article titled "Home Is Where the Hated Is" by Ta-Nehisi Coates gives a wonderful synopsis of what I call terrorism on our shores from the plantations to Christian Churches, the Atlantic to Pacific, Congress to Wall Street and from Chicago's West Side Horners to Northshore Evanston.

In Coates book, "The Case for Reparations", he tried to move the lens from the enslaved and focus on their descendants. I got it past the "but they're all long dead" argument. Also, once you understand enslavement as central – not ancillary – to American history, you can then easily intuit that it would have some serious effects on policy 100 years later. When you then consider what directly followed enslavement – disenfranchisement, pogroms, land theft, terrorism, the entire suite of plunder – it seems inconceivable that 20th century domestic policy would not be awash in white supremacy."

Coates then skillfully analyzes Kenneth Jackson's "Crabgrass Frontier" which explains the shape of America's cities and suburbs. "In painstaking detail, Jackson shows how the Federal Housing Administration and the Homeowner's Loan Corporation subsidized segregation and helped author the wealth gap. I'd heard about redlining before, but Jackson's book really laid out, in detail, how federal policy worked.

Next Coates looks at Isabel Wilkerson's "The Warmth of Other Suns". "More importantly, for my work, she reversed a popular trend to conflate impoverishment with racism and pretend as though "the black poor" are the "real" problem. If only quietly, Wilkerson builds a strong case that the policy of the American government has not been to encourage a black middle class, but to discourage it and open it for plunder."

In focusing on Chicago, Coates went to Beryl Satter's book, "Family Properties" the history of contract lending in the city. Her book covers many matters. "It is a history of housing. It is an analysis of relationships between black and Jewish communities. And it is a family memoir (her dad was both a housing activist and a landlord.) But most importantly it is an account of how federal policy was used to fleece people – many of whom are still living.

Coates – "What I saw in all of these books that was so damning was intent. Government policy toward African Americans is not an argument for the

ineffectuality of government, on the contrary it is an argument for just how effective government can be. The intent of mid-20th -century policy was the elevation of a white middle class and the preservation of white supremacy. The policy was a rousing success.”

Well, how could all this be understood if you haven't lived it or lived with someone going through it. This reality came with our adoption. The only thing that a concerned person can do is walk beside the victims of racism and perhaps ease their discomforts, open a door for them or do whatever you can to help. Of course, as this country percentagewise becomes more non-white then, perhaps things will become more equitable, as at the present time this country is almost a majority of colored minorities population wise.

There is nothing any of us can do about who we are, being born black or white; however, there is something 'equitably' we can do about how we deal with the color of our skins, both black, white or anywhere in between.

Bottom Line...

...If my wife and I had known all the above, it is quite doubtful that we would have bought a home here in 1972.

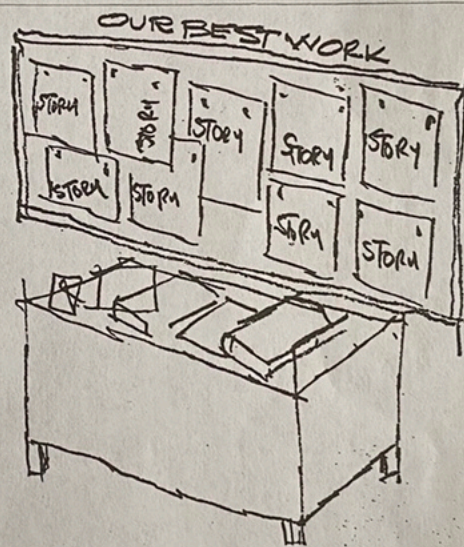
Section 12 – Photo Gallery

Next Page

Photo Gallery

Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School

1971 - 2000



sketch by *Seymour Shelist*

Parental Collaboration

**A
Neighborhood
Worth
Saving**



Florence Wright



Sue Sago



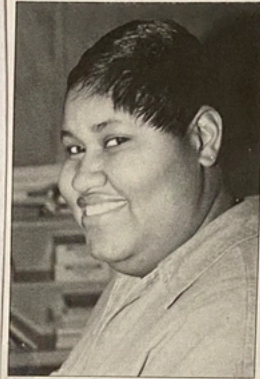
Rhonda Palmore



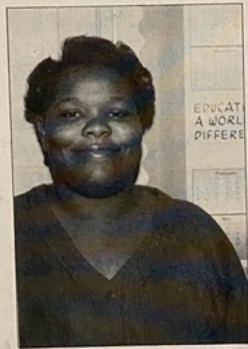
Rene Garret



Sellus Sago



Debra Garrett

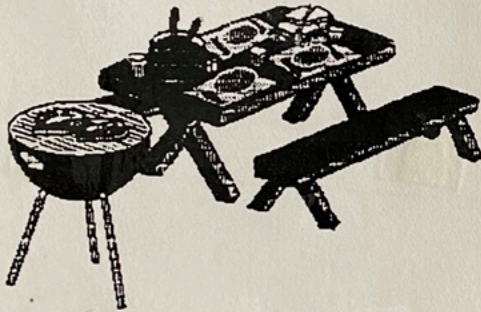
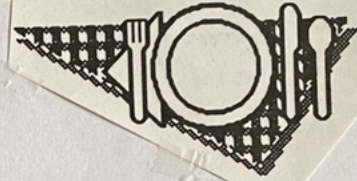


Luceta Epinger



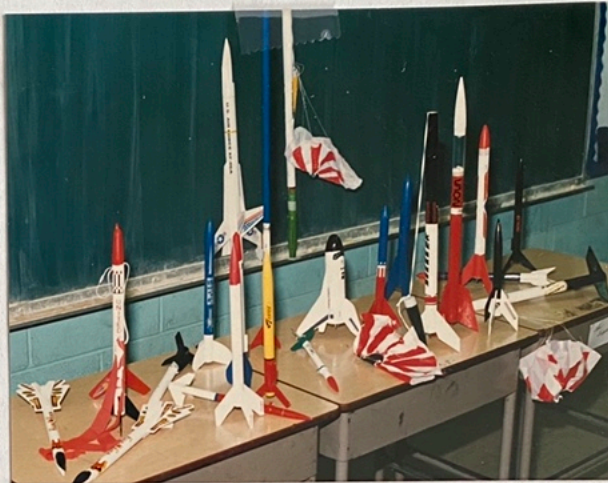


Parent Chefs



Launching Their Futures

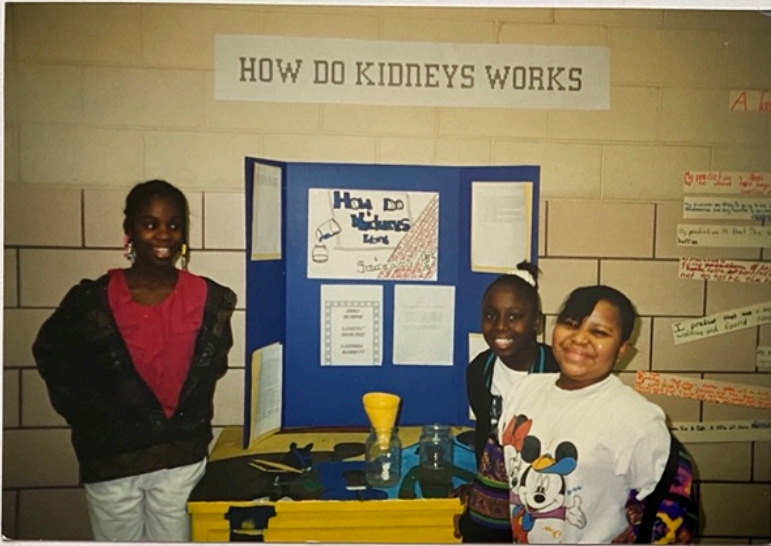




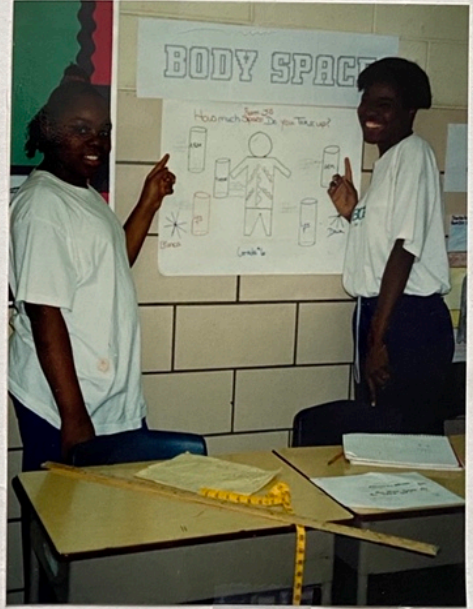
10,9,8,.....1 Blast Off!



HOW DO KIDNEYS WORKS



Science Fair

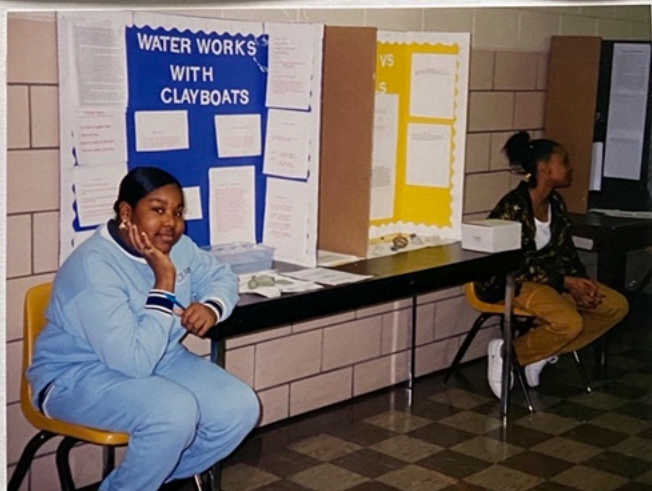
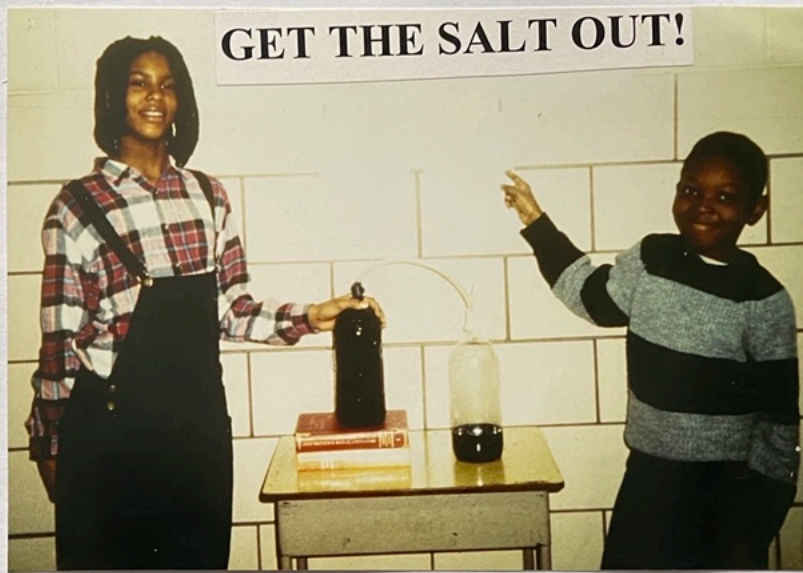


WATER GOES AROUND



Student

Collaborations





Archaeological Dig



Spertus Institute Museum





Dig

CHICAGO EDUCATOR

FOR THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Chicago Educator - October 23, 1996

'Campus Park' Springs to Life at Dett

City, school, and Park District leaders are spearheading a program that over the next four years will bring Campus Parks to at least 100 public schools.

R. Nathaniel Dett School, 2306 W. Maypole Ave., unveiled its Campus Park—the first built as part of the program—during an Oct. 17 dedication ceremony attended by Mayor Richard M. Daley; Gery J. Chico, President of the Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees, and Forrest Claypool, Superintendent of the Chicago Park District.

"The children are the heart and soul of our city," Mayor Daley said. "We need to bring the city, the schools, the Park District and the community together to build safe havens for children. That's what our schools should be, havens for our children."

Dett School's Campus Park is a total community effort. In 1994, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois—which has long been active in supporting the Henry Horner neighborhood—came up with the idea of turning a vacant, neglected parcel of land adjacent to the school into a park. The Chicago Department of Planning and Development liked the idea and—under the leadership of Mayor Daley and with funding and volunteer support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield—the project attracted the CPS and St. Malachy School in as partners. Both the school system and the Archdiocese of Chicago owned pieces of the vacant land that was converted into the park.

"This park shows what can be accomplished when the public and private sector work together," Chico said. "The city, School Board and Park District have teamed up with a terrific corporate neighbor and with the Archdiocese of Chicago [which runs St. Malachy] to make these schools safe places to learn, inside and out."

Claypool said that teamwork will help the Park District make an impact on more neighborhoods. "A good park can be a focal point for the neighborhood," he said.



Photo by Brent Jones

Mayor Richard M. Daley walks through the Dett School wildflower garden with teacher Laurence McCarthy and his sixth-grade class.

The centerpiece of Dett's Campus Park is a butterfly-shaped wildflower garden. Designed by professional gardener Chet Jakus, the garden not only serves as an eye-catching entry to the park, it will also be used as a classroom. Jakus has compiled a curriculum designed to teach students about wildflowers, planting gardens, the wildlife attracted to gardens, and harvesting the flowers. A New Leaf Florist—a Near North Side business—will be selling flowers from the garden, with proceeds going back into the program.

The 2.25-acre Campus Park also includes a new playground and an open field for soccer, football, and other outdoor games.

Albert Bernard, a sixth-grader at Dett School, was impressed by the garden. "It's beautiful," he said. "We've already had some classes out here and have learned about planting flowers. It's fun to get out of the school for class."

But for Albert and classmate Laquinton Wooten, the beauty isn't the best part. "The swings are the best," they said in unison, pointing toward the playground. "They're more fun," Albert added.

Judy McCaskey, the wife of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois President Raymond McCaskey, attended the dedication ceremony to pledge the company's support for the Henry Horner neighborhood. "We want the children here to grow and bloom just like the flowers," she said.

Principal Donald Feinstein is excited about what the park will mean for the school. "This project is so meaningful," he said. "It's meaningful in that it puts children first, and it's meaningful in that it helps develop a community of learners."

According to Diane Aigotti, City Budget Director, \$50 million will go toward the Campus Parks program over the next four years, with the city, the school system, and the Park District splitting the cost of construction and maintenance. Additional support from private organizations will also be sought. At least 25 parks will be added each year. The first set of schools to receive Campus Parks is in the process of being selected.

"This is what government is all about," Mayor Daley said, "working together with the community to improve the quality of life."

Future City Farmers





City Meets the Country





Devilishness

This new picture of us,
Upper Cycle teachers,
was posted on the wall outside
my door in the morning.



However,... *please turn the page.*

Later that day it was updated.



Hmmm! Apparently, little R_____ was not happy with the little reprimand he received for his mischievous behavior during the day.

It still keeps me chuckling.

Old St. Patrick's Cont'd

In the Introduction to the book "Chalk Talk" I referred to the Old St. Patrick's building across the street from Dett School. The BBP (Black Panther Party) member there was setting up the after-school tutoring and band programs. Also mentioned was the assignation of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Let's continue that conversation here and the influence of Violence in this community!

It was two years before this time that Fred Hampton, Deputy Chairman of the Illinois Chapter of the BPP (Black Panther Party) lived at 2337 West Monroe just two and half blocks from our school. He was instrumental in putting together a nonaggression pact among the city's most powerful street gangs, as well as being a leader in activities for the black community. He was skilled in organizing, oratory and had a personal charisma. He and Mark Clark, a fellow member of the BPP, were assassinated on December 4, 1969, in a raid organized by Cook County State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan. It was carried out by a tactical unit of his office, in conjunction with the Chicago Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Although the FBI special agent in San Francisco wrote J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, that his investigation of the BPP revealed in his city, at least, that the Panthers were primarily feeding breakfast to children." Hoover was incensed and wanted evidence that the BPP "was a violent-prone organization seeking to overthrow the Government, by revolutionary means." Hoover was willing to use false claims to attack his political enemies. On one memo he wrote: "Purpose of counterintelligence action is to disrupt the BPP, and it is immaterial whether facts exist to substantiate the charge." Wikipedia, FBI Investigation p. 2

This is an example of how the largest federal agency the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) together with a county's States Attorney and a local Police Force can team up to suppress (assassinate) two community leaders because of - the color of their skin.

The following readings will detail how this affects one community on Chicago's West Side.

Appendix 1 Violence on Chicago's West Side...Student's Analysis

'Children of Violence on the West Side' - 'Grief's Children'

Overhanging all the challenges in the classroom is one constant: violence in the surrounding environment. This racist imprint of our country has manifested itself harshly upon our minority black population.

Here are the responses to the survey 'Children of Violence on the West Side.' and the video 'Grief's Children.' After discussions about this, I put together the survey below to better understand the reality of my students' experiences.

My students were in a Federal Title I program. The class was limited to no more than fifteen students, and this is the reason there were only eleven responses to the survey.

Class Survey after watching video – 'Grief's Children.'

1. Is this video accurate (true)?
2. What kinds of violence have you encountered?
3. What are your fears?
4. Is it easy for you to be violent against someone else?
5. Would you be a different person if you lived somewhere else?
6. How different would your parents be in a different neighborhood?
7. Do you feel stress?
8. What does life mean to you?
9. What part does school have for you now and in the future?
10. Did you like this video? Why?

Students answer the above questions on the following pages.

Grief's Children

1. yes! it is true.

2. no! I did not experience any violence.

3. dying and something happening to me or my family.

4. If they are smaller than you yes.

5. no!

6. they would be the same and it would be safer for me.

7. no! because I live in a safe place

8. It means a lot.

9. It means a lot to me now and it will in the future.

10. yes

Student Three

1. *This movie is very accurate to me because It's telling us the things that happened to the children*
2. *I have been encountered in violence but never got shot or any other thing*
3. *My fears when they I get I get scared.*
4. *No it is not easy form me to be violent against someones*
5. *Yes I would be a different personif I lived somewhere else*
6. *It would be safer for the parents to let the kids go out*
7. *Yes I do geel stress because I get tired of the shooting and fighting that be going on.*
8. *Life is a very important thing to me*
9. *The school has a very important par for me*
10. *Yes I did like this video. Because It was showing us what was happening*

Student Four

1. *Yes this video is very true.*
2. *I have encountered all kind of violence.*
3. *My fear is that some thing will happy to my people.*
4. *Some time it is very easy.*
5. *May be and may be not.*
6. *My parents will be very different.*
7. *No I don't feel stress.*
8. *Life is a Step up for me.*
9. *It has no efft on me*
10. *Yes I like the videocueas it explaine a lot*

Student Five

- (1) *Yes it is true*
- (2) *I got beat up*
- (3) *People will stop shooting other people
and not kill people*
- (4) *No its no easy to hert some body*
- (5) *No I want to be a different person
Because I am the same way*
- (6) *The will ver happy and the
will have no urgurment*
- (7) *No I don't feel stress wright now
Because I feel great*
- (8) *Life means a lot to it means people has
No life I think get I have som life*
- (9) *It have*
- (10) *Yes I like*

Student Six

1. *I think this vidio is true*
2. *Ive encountered many violence around my house*
3. *My fear is how I die. Besides my parents*
4. *No*
5. *I would be a free person*
6. *My perents are safe living in another place*
7. *I feel very angry.*
8. *it mean a lot ot me*
9. *it does very much How*
10. *No, to much violets*

Student Seven

1. *Yes it is true*
2. *Yes I have not bee in stuf lilke that.*
3. *that I might get killd or rap.*
4. *Kid off sometimes its not.*
5. *Yes I will.*
6. *They mide will be off of Drugs.*
7. *No I don't.*
8. *Something*

Student Eight

1. *Yes the video is true*
2. *I havnt been in know violence because my family makes sure I am not around gangs but I say gangs are every were.*
3. *The fears I have Is guns, and gang.*
4. *No because I believe some gang bangers are nice most of the them are in gangs for attention not for killing.*
5. *Yes Ill be a little different because Ill be living in a safe area and clean no fighting I love it.*
6. *My mother and the rest of my family would be glad to leave this place because my mother allways say Devon we will make it I know were stugling but well make it.*
7. *Some times I fill scared but I pray I get home safe.*
8. *It means a lot to me I want to achieve in life*
9. *Its keeping me away from gangs when Im in school I think I play an important part in school*
10. *Yes I like this video because it bring out the true meaning in killing*

Student Nine

1. *Yes*
2. *No*
3. *being shot at stave (stab) or hurt in any other way*
4. *No*
5. *I would be different by not jumping ever time I hear a gun shot or anything.*
6. *Maybe they would feel safety by let there kids go out en wouldn't have to worrie*
7. *NO*
8. *Love, peace, and very good Education*
9. *Education*
10. *Yes because its happened in Real life tin at people but some just don't surve*

Student Ten

1. *Yes*
2. *I Got shot in the arm*
3. *My Fear is when a crook comes into my House and something*
4. *No*
5. *Kind of*
6. *They would be nice and happy*
7. *A lot*
8. *Love peace and Happiness*
9. *Yes*
10. *No, to much violents*

Student Eleven

1. *Yes it is Because it happen years after years*
2. *I have no Ben in no games (gangs) Because it can interfear with your School work*
3. *Shooting fighting and other Bad fears*
4. *The games will make you aurn and want to fight ant your familyies.*
5. *I will like in a house Be it will make me and my family fill Batter*
6. *Us will Be the Same*
7. *I feel strise when I gone readey to go home.*
8. *It mean a lot to me. I want ot achievement my life*
9. *Because I can play Basketball in the future*
10. *To may shooting*

Appendix 2 4 Years Later – Student’s Violence Survey

The fourteen 6th graders worked in teams of two and surveyed 174 students and nine of their teachers from 4th through 8th grades.

The ages of the students surveyed ranged from about 10 to 14. This survey, like any area of Statistical Analysis, presents a very good graphic synopsis of a subject area. Although later, after tallying the results, a question was put to me because of some inaccurate responses to one question. This dealt with the question of, how factual are statistics? Well, such a simple question was aptly answered many years ago by Samuel Clemens, pen name Mark Twain. He was quoted once as saying, “There are lies, there are damned lies, and then there are statistics.” However, this is to assure you that there are no lies in this survey although there was a misunderstanding of one question. That was, ‘Has this ever happened to you?’ regarding the 15 categories of violence. Five students filled in choice ‘A’ which was Killing which of course could not be accurate, as again of course, because they would not have been alive to report it. This was a youthful misunderstanding of this question format. Although, the reality of the errors in the survey made me realize that I don’t remember ever discussing violence or killing from ages 10–14, let alone experiencing them in my neighborhood.

The balance of this survey does give an excellent portrayal of the difficulties our students had to confront daily, in the confines of their community. And again, they put this survey together from what they felt was pertinent to their reality of living in Henry Horner Homes.

The survey:

Community Problems

- A. Has this ever happened to you?
- B. Has this almost happened to you?
- C. Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?
- D. Has this ever happened to one of your friends?

Place the above letters where they apply in the following categories:

- 1. Killing
- 2. Shootings
- 3. Drugs
- 4. Rape
- 5. Stealing
- 6. Child Abuse
- 7. Fighting

- 8. Kidnapping___
- 9. Gang Bangers___
- 10. Guns___
- 11. Knives___
- 12. Bad Dreams___
- 13. Suicide___
- 14. Disease___
- 15. T.A.P. (Teen Age Pregnancy)___

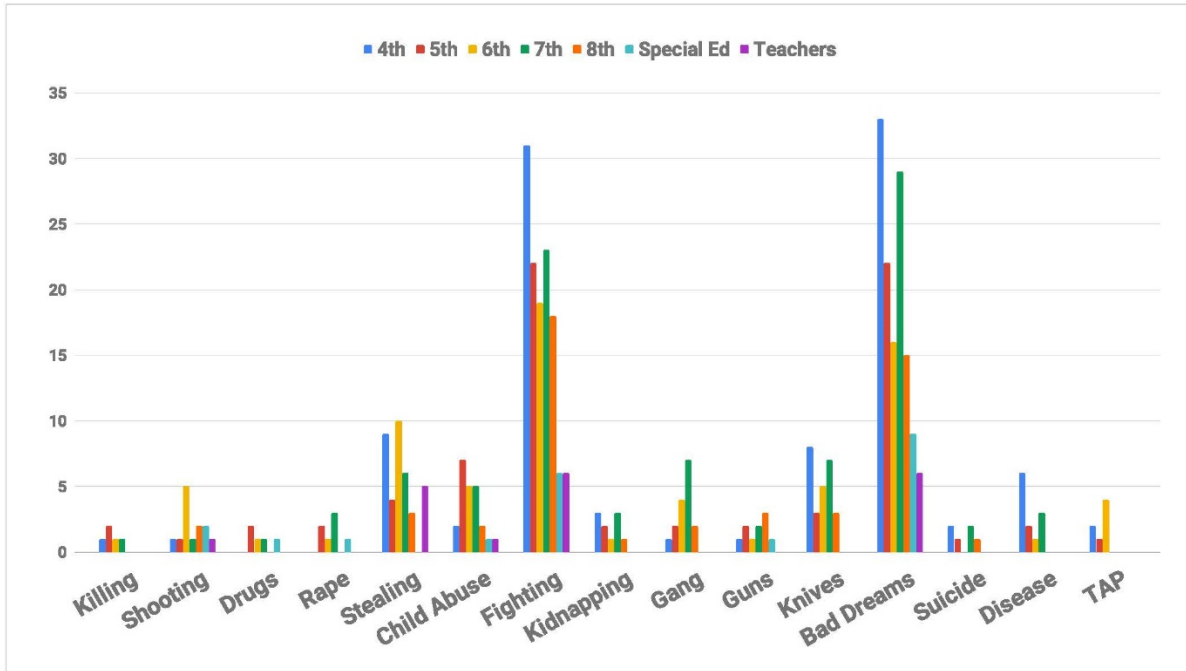
Has this ever happened to you?

TABLE 1a: Composite Grade Violence Survey Responses

	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Special Ed	Teachers
Killing	1	2	1	1	0	0	0
Shooting	1	1	5	1	2	2	1
Drugs	0	2	1	1	0	1	0
Rape	0	2	1	3	0	1	0
Stealing	9	4	10	6	3	0	5
Child Abuse	2	7	5	5	2	1	1
Fighting	31	22	19	23	18	6	6
Kidnapping	3	2	1	3	1	0	0
Gang	1	2	4	7	2	0	0
Guns	1	2	1	2	3	1	0
Knives	8	3	5	7	3	0	0
Bad Dreams	33	22	16	29	15	9	6
Suicide	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Disease	6	2	1	3	0	0	0
TAP	2	1	4	0	0	0	0

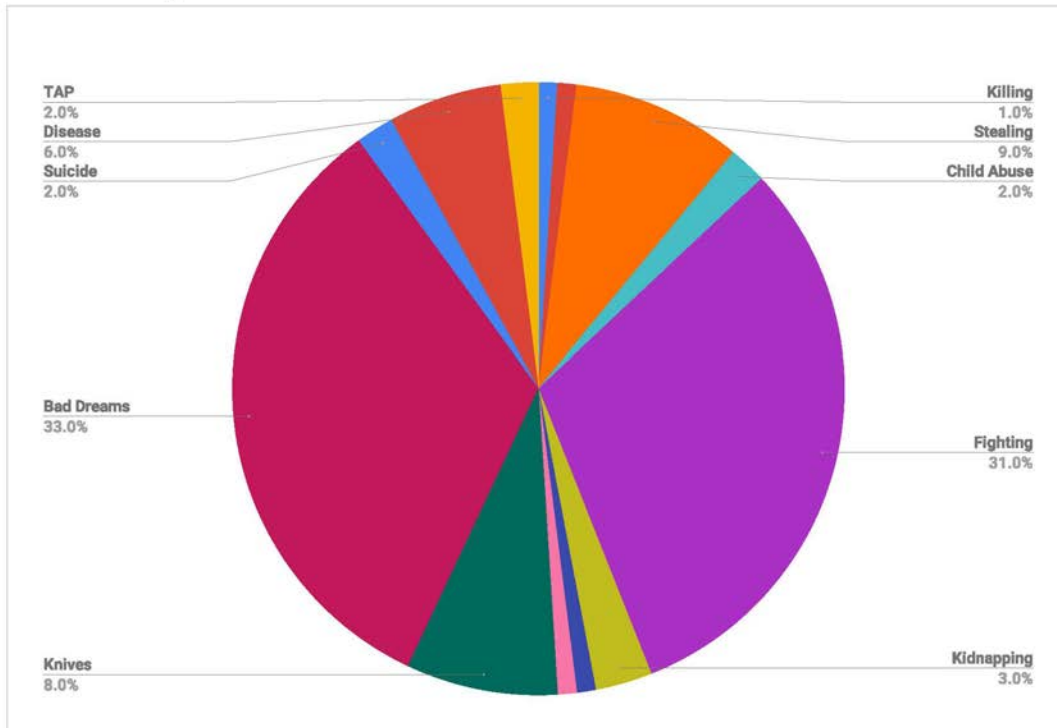
Has this ever happened to you?

Table 1b - Composite Grade Violence Bar Graph



Has this ever happened to you?

Table 1c - Composite Grade Violence Pie Chart



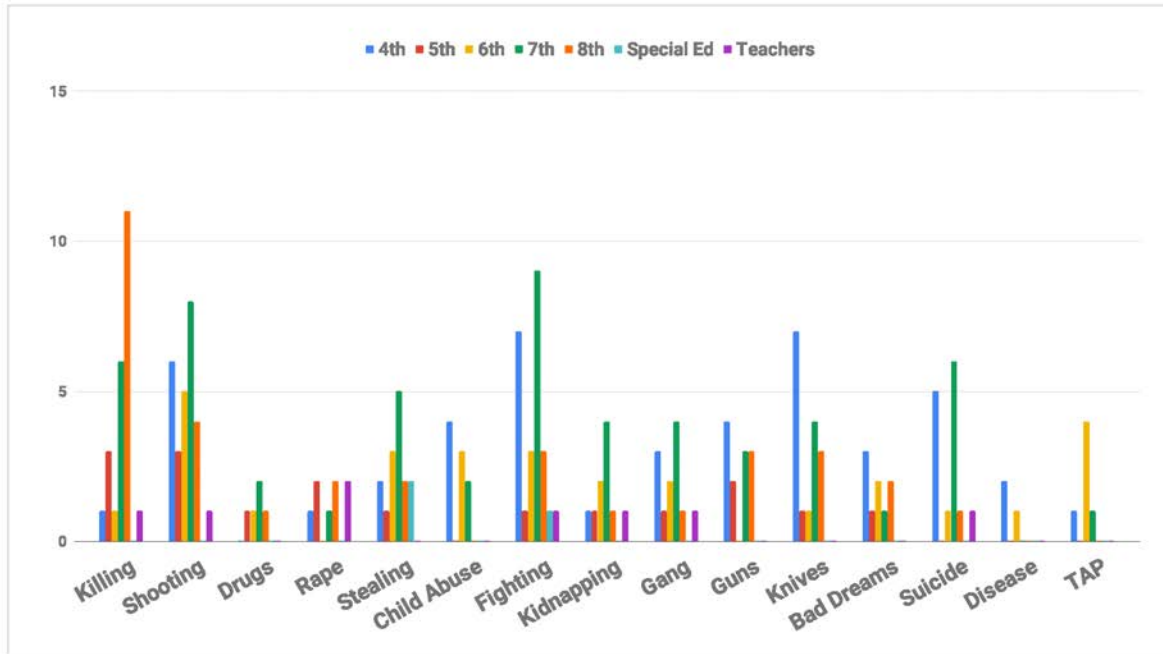
Has this almost happened to you?

TABLE 2a: Composite Grade Violence Survey Responses

	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Special Ed	Teachers
Killing	1	3	1	6	11	0	1
Shooting	6	3	5	8	4	0	1
Drugs	0	1	1	2	1	0	0
Rape	1	2	0	1	2	0	2
Stealing	2	1	3	5	2	2	0
Child Abuse	4	0	3	2	0	0	0
Fighting	7	1	3	9	3	1	1
Kidnapping	1	1	2	4	1	0	1
Gang	3	1	2	4	1	0	1
Guns	4	2	0	3	3	0	0
Knives	7	1	1	4	3	0	0
Bad Dreams	3	1	2	1	2	0	0
Suicide	5	0	1	6	1	0	1
Disease	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
TAP	1	0	4	1	0	0	0

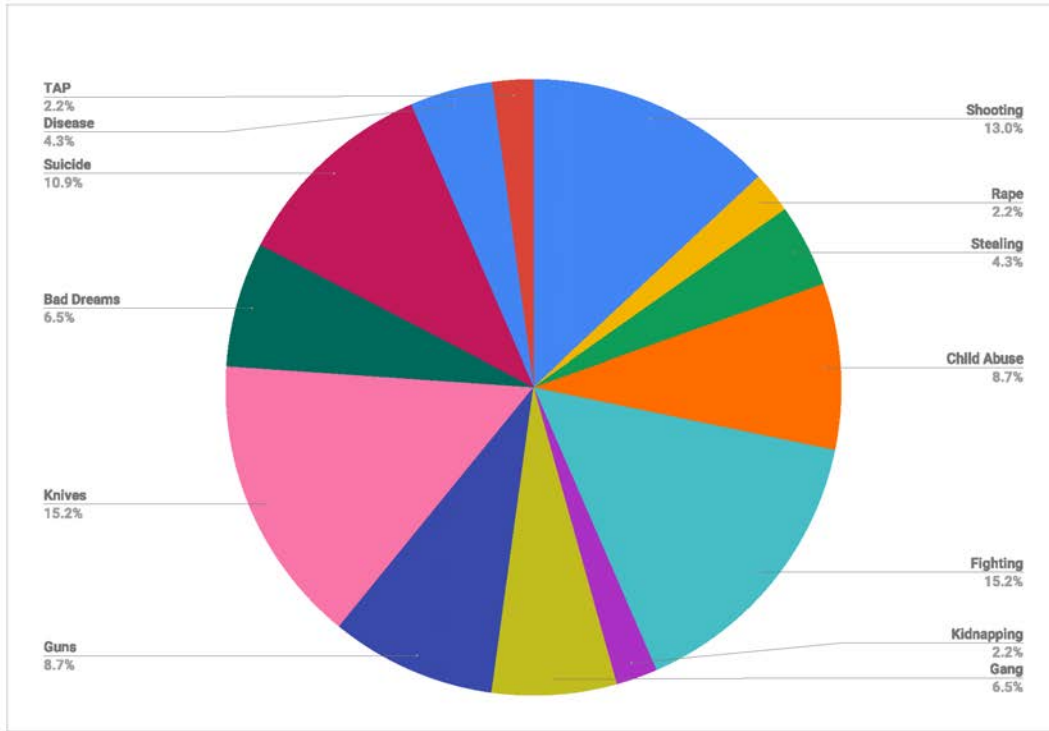
Has this almost happened to you?

Table 2b - Composite Grade Violence Bar Graph



Has this almost happened to you?

Table 2c - Composite Grade Violence Pie Chart



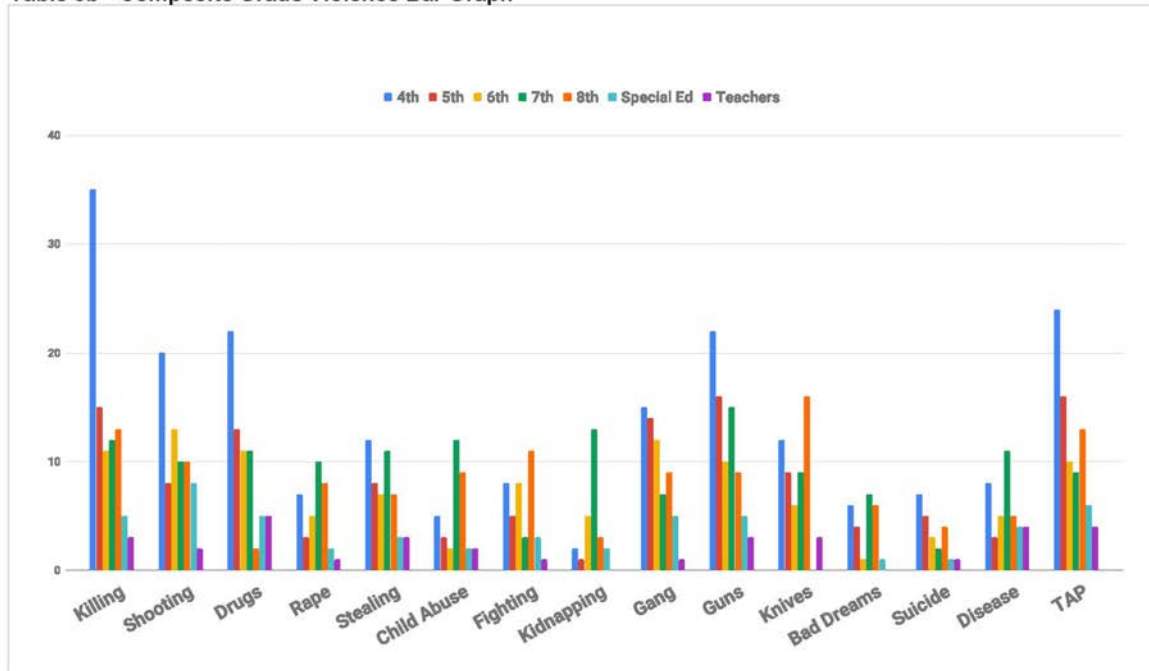
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?

TABLE 3a: Composite Grade Violence Survey Responses

	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Special Ed	Teachers
Killing	35	15	11	12	13	5	3
Shooting	20	8	13	10	10	8	2
Drugs	22	13	11	11	2	5	5
Rape	7	3	5	10	8	2	1
Stealing	12	8	7	11	7	3	3
Child Abuse	5	3	2	12	9	2	2
Fighting	8	5	8	3	11	3	1
Kidnapping	2	1	5	13	3	2	0
Gang	15	14	12	7	9	5	1
Guns	22	16	10	15	9	5	3
Knives	12	9	6	9	16	0	3
Bad Dreams	6	4	1	7	6	1	0
Suicide	7	5	3	2	4	1	1
Disease	8	3	5	11	5	4	4
TAP	24	16	10	9	13	6	4

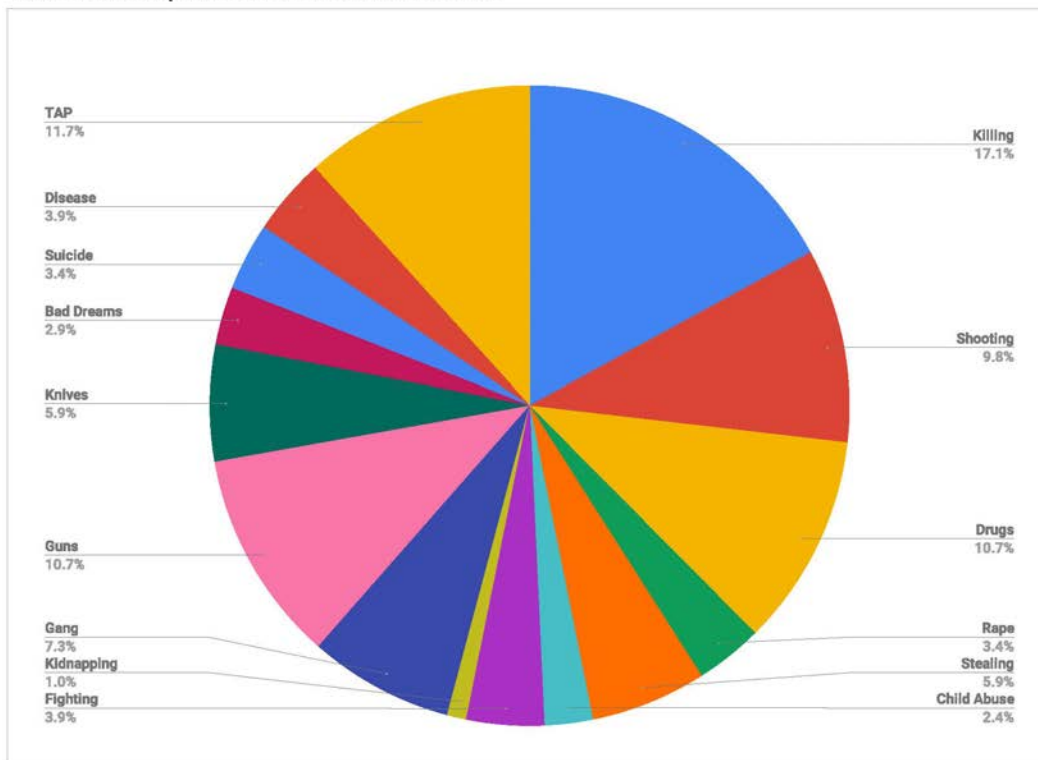
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?

Table 3b - Composite Grade Violence Bar Graph



Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?

Table 3c - Composite Grade Violence Pie Chart



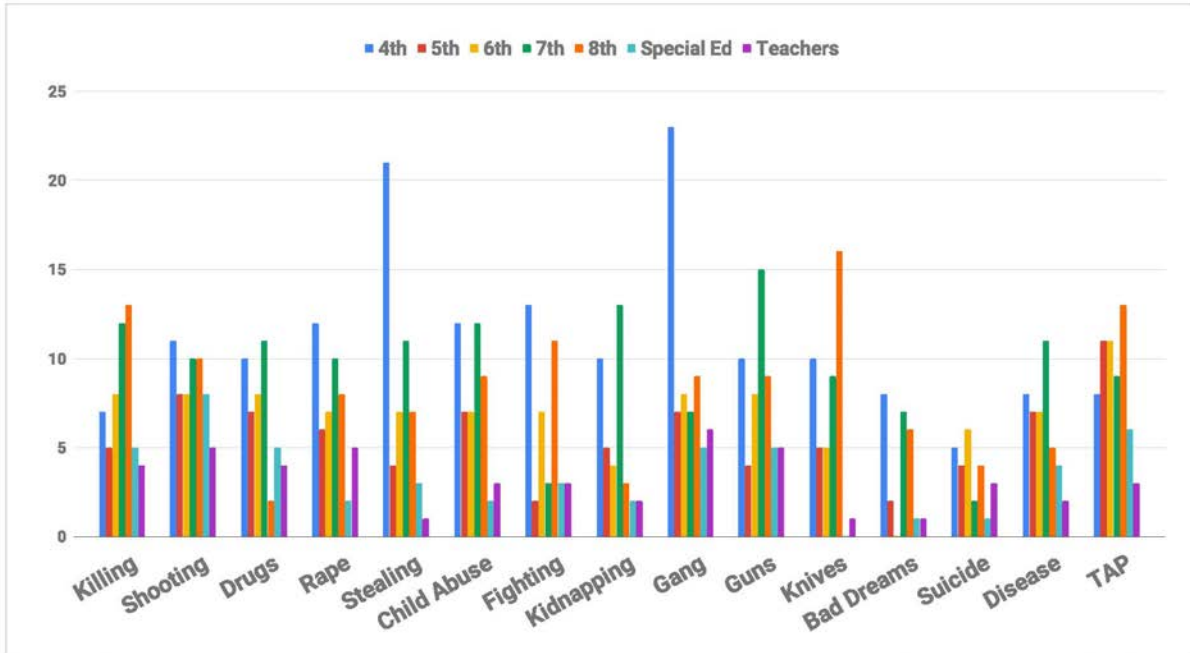
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?

TABLE 4a: Composite Grade Violence Survey Responses

	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Special Ed	Teachers
Killing	7	5	8	12	13	5	4
Shooting	11	8	8	10	10	8	5
Drugs	10	7	8	11	2	5	4
Rape	12	6	7	10	8	2	5
Stealing	21	4	7	11	7	3	1
Child Abuse	12	7	7	12	9	2	3
Fighting	13	2	7	3	11	3	3
Kidnapping	10	5	4	13	3	2	2
Gang	23	7	8	7	9	5	6
Guns	10	4	8	15	9	5	5
Knives	10	5	5	9	16	0	1
Bad Dreams	8	2	0	7	6	1	1
Suicide	5	4	6	2	4	1	3
Disease	8	7	7	11	5	4	2
TAP	8	11	11	9	13	6	3

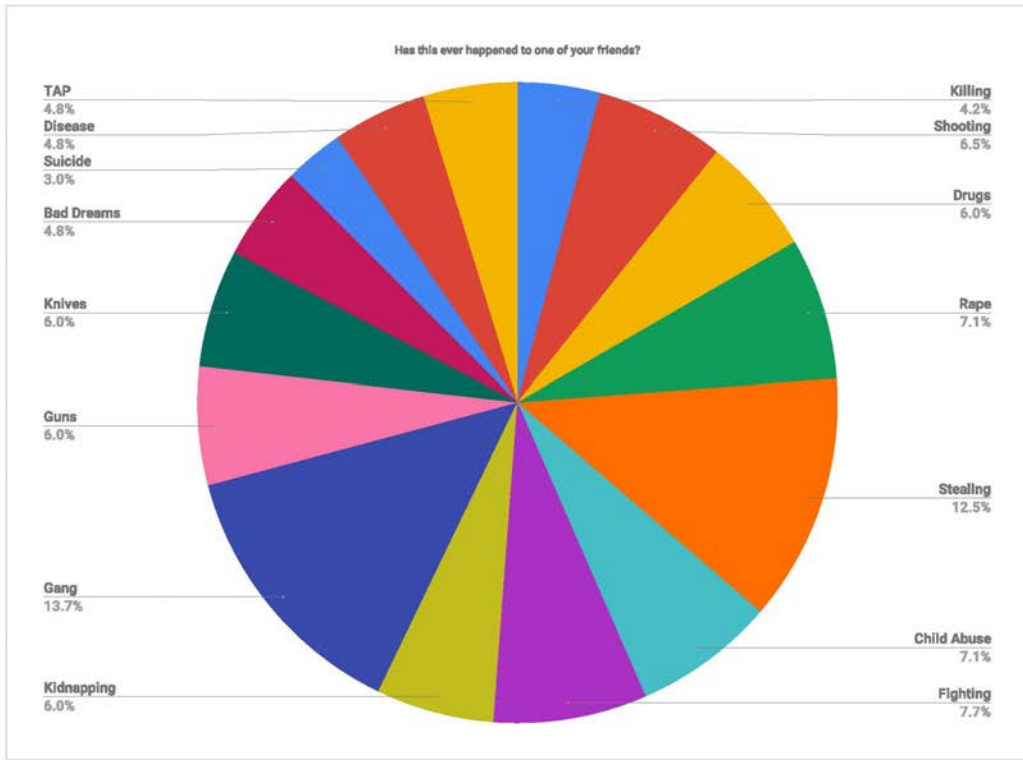
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?

Table 4b - Composite Grade Violence Bar Graph



Has this ever happened to one of your friends?

Table 4c - Composite Grade Violence Pie Chart

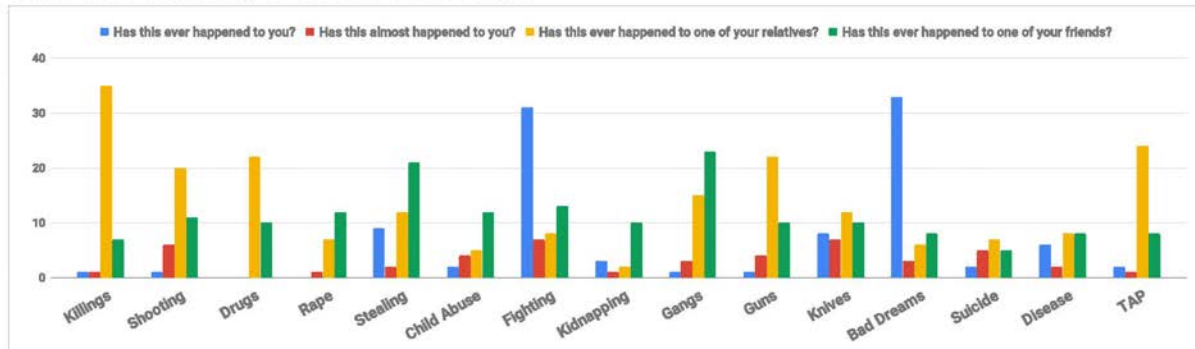


4th Grade

Table 5a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

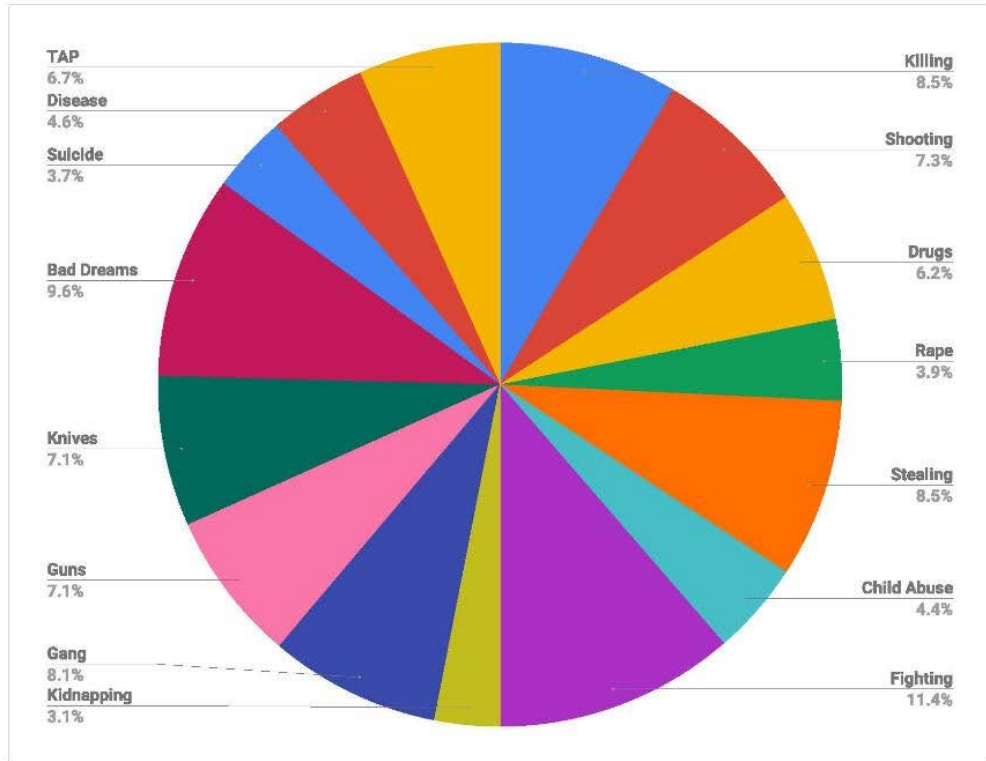
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	
Has this ever happened to you?	1	1	0	0	9	2	31	3	1	1	8	33	2	6	2	100
Has this almost happened to you?	1	6	0	1	2	4	7	1	3	4	7	3	5	2	1	47
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	35	20	22	7	12	5	8	2	15	22	12	6	7	8	24	205
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	7	11	10	12	21	12	13	10	23	10	10	8	5	8	8	168

Table 5b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



4th Grade
Table 5c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	44	8.48%
Shooting	38	7.31%
Drugs	32	6.15%
Rape	20	3.85%
Stealing	44	8.48%
Child Abuse	23	4.42%
Fighting	59	11.35%
Kidnapping	16	3.08%
Gang	42	8.08%
Guns	37	7.12%
Knives	37	7.12%
Bad Dreams	50	9.60%
Suicide	19	3.65%
Disease	24	4.62%
TAP	35	6.73%
TOTAL	520	100.00%

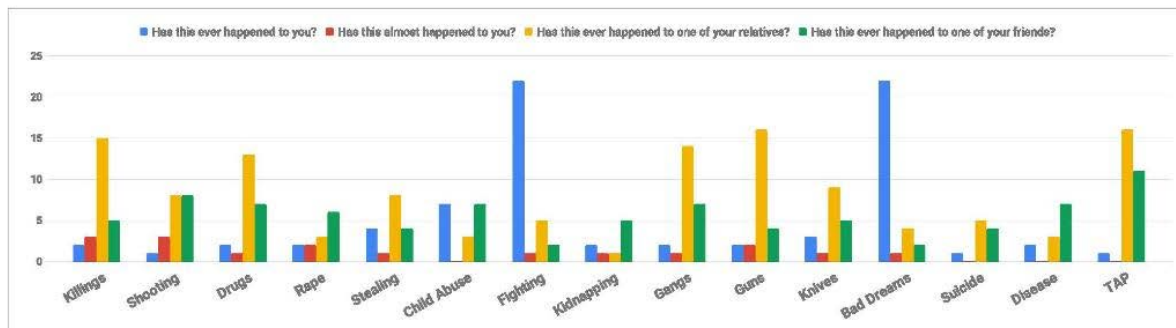


5th Grade

Table 6a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

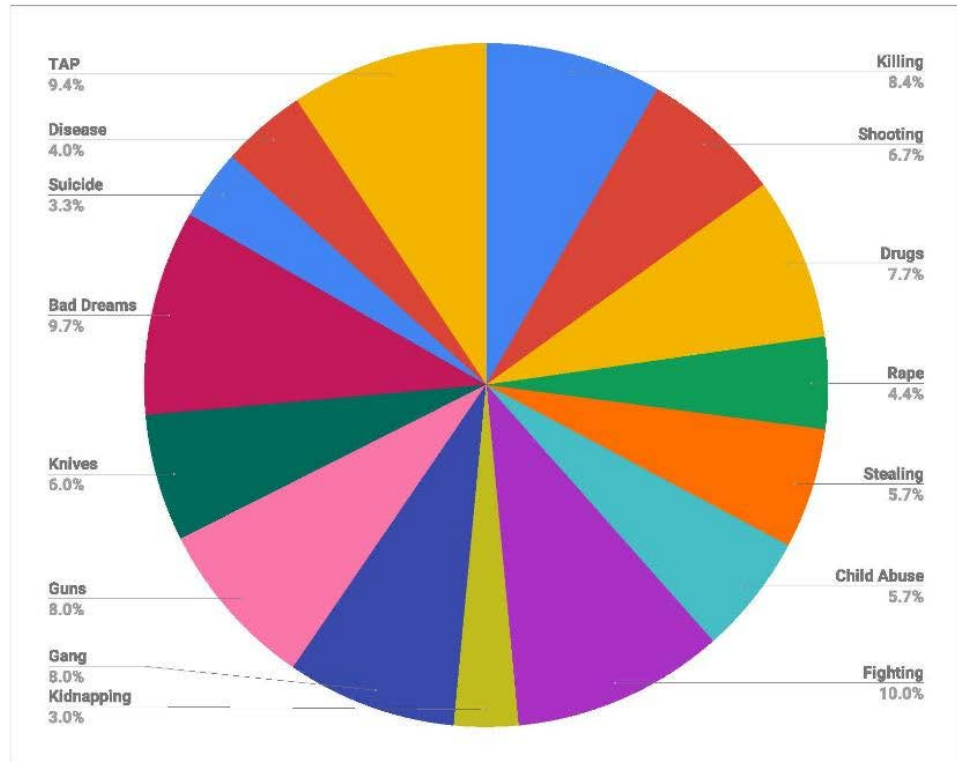
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	TOTAL
Has this ever happened to you?	2	1	2	2	4	7	22	2	2	2	3	22	1	2	1	75
Has this almost happened to you?	3	3	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	17
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	15	8	13	3	8	3	5	1	14	16	9	4	5	3	16	123
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	5	8	7	6	4	7	2	5	7	4	5	2	4	7	11	84

Table 6b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



**5th Grade
Table 6c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart**

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	25	8.36%
Shooting	20	6.68%
Drugs	23	7.68%
Rape	13	4.35%
Stealing	17	5.69%
Child Abuse	17	5.69%
Fighting	30	10.03%
Kidnapping	9	3.01%
Gang	24	8.03%
Guns	24	8.03%
Knives	18	6.02%
Bad Dreams	29	9.70%
Suicide	10	3.34%
Disease	12	4.01%
TAP	28	9.36%
TOTAL	289	100.00%

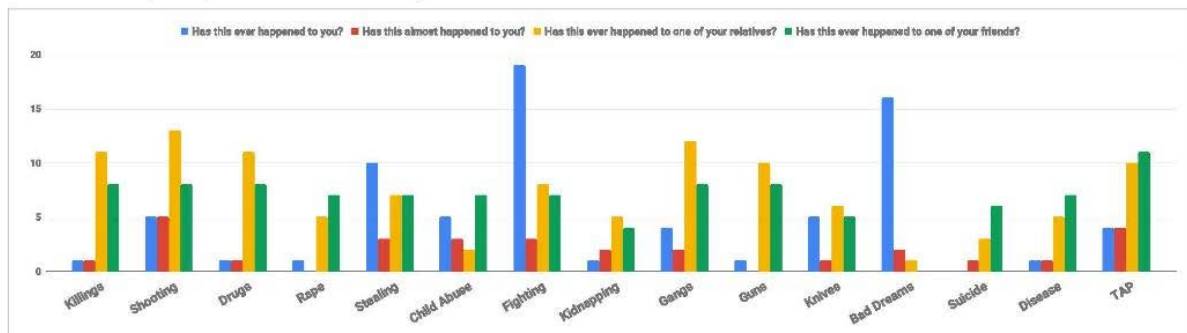


6th Grade

Table 7a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

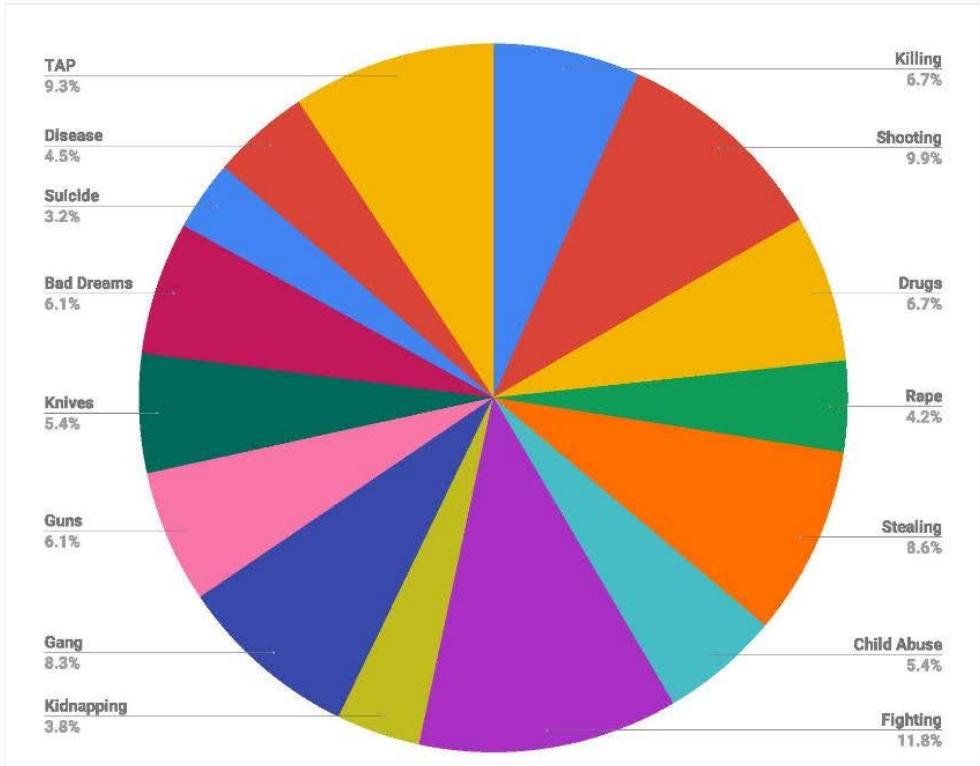
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	
Has this ever happened to you?	1	5	1	1	10	5	19	1	4	1	5	16	0	1	4	74
Has this almost happened to you?	1	5	1	0	3	3	3	2	2	0	1	2	1	1	4	29
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	11	13	11	5	7	2	8	5	12	10	6	1	3	5	10	108
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	4	8	8	5	0	6	7	11	101

Table 7b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



**6th Grade
Table 7c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart**

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	21	6.71%
Shooting	31	9.90%
Drugs	21	6.71%
Rape	13	4.15%
Stealing	27	8.63%
Child Abuse	17	5.43%
Fighting	37	11.82%
Kidnapping	12	3.83%
Gang	28	8.31%
Guns	19	6.07%
Knives	17	5.43%
Bad Dreams	19	6.07%
Suicide	10	3.19%
Disease	14	4.47%
TAP	29	9.27%
TOTAL	313	100.00%

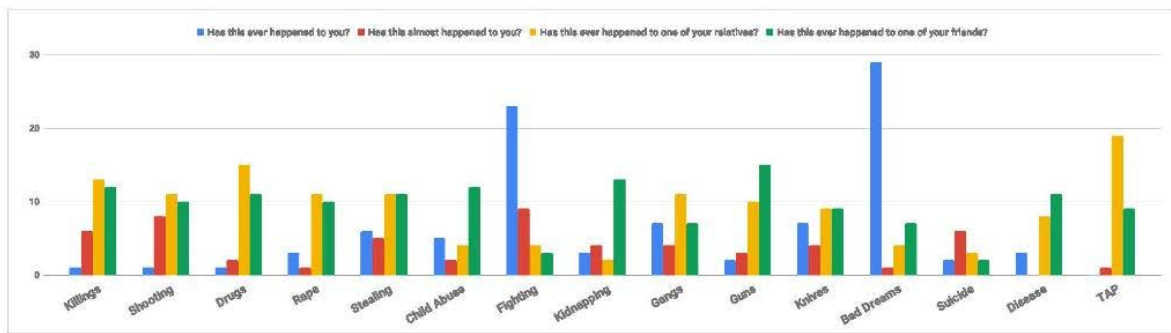


7th Grade

Table 8a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

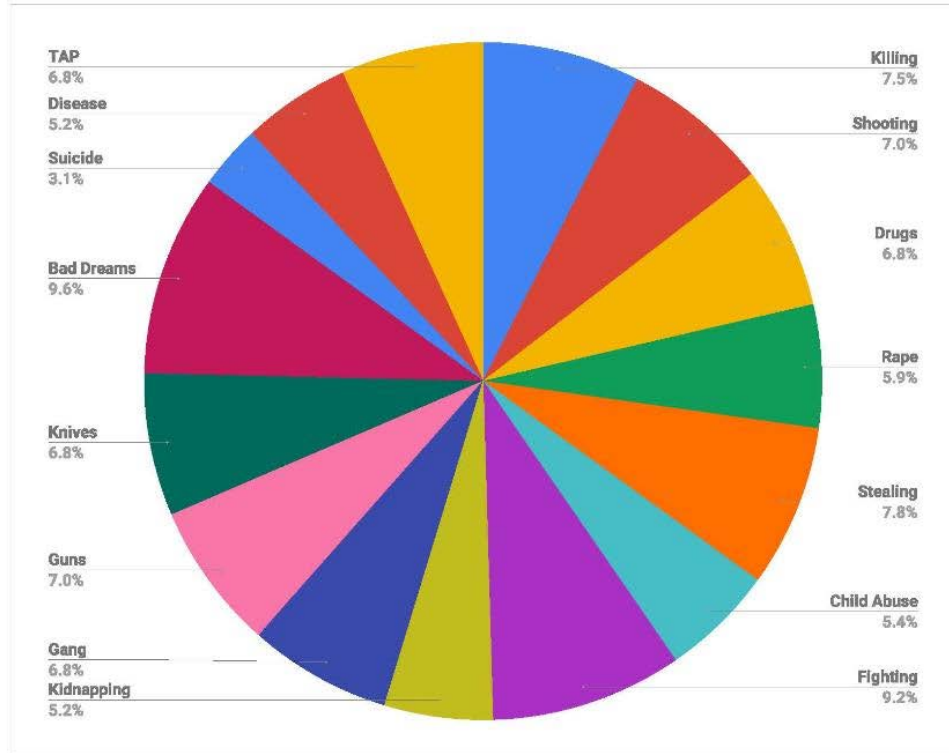
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	TOTAL
Has this ever happened to you?	1	1	1	3	6	5	23	3	7	2	7	29	2	3	0	93
Has this almost happened to you?	6	8	2	1	5	2	9	4	4	3	4	1	6	0	1	56
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	13	11	15	11	11	4	4	2	11	10	9	4	3	8	19	135
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	12	10	11	10	11	12	3	13	7	15	9	7	2	11	9	142

Table 8b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



7th Grade
 Table 8c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	32	7.51%
Shooting	30	7.04%
Drugs	29	6.81%
Rape	25	5.88%
Stealing	33	7.75%
Child Abuse	23	5.40%
Fighting	39	9.15%
Kidnapping	22	5.16%
Gang	29	6.81%
Guns	30	7.04%
Knives	29	6.81%
Bad Dreams	41	9.62%
Suicide	13	3.05%
Disease	22	5.16%
TAP	29	6.81%
TOTAL	426	100.00%

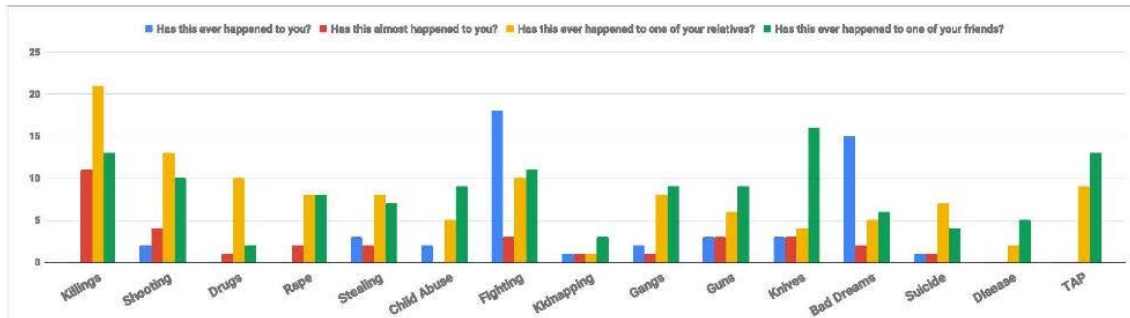


8th Grade

Table 9a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

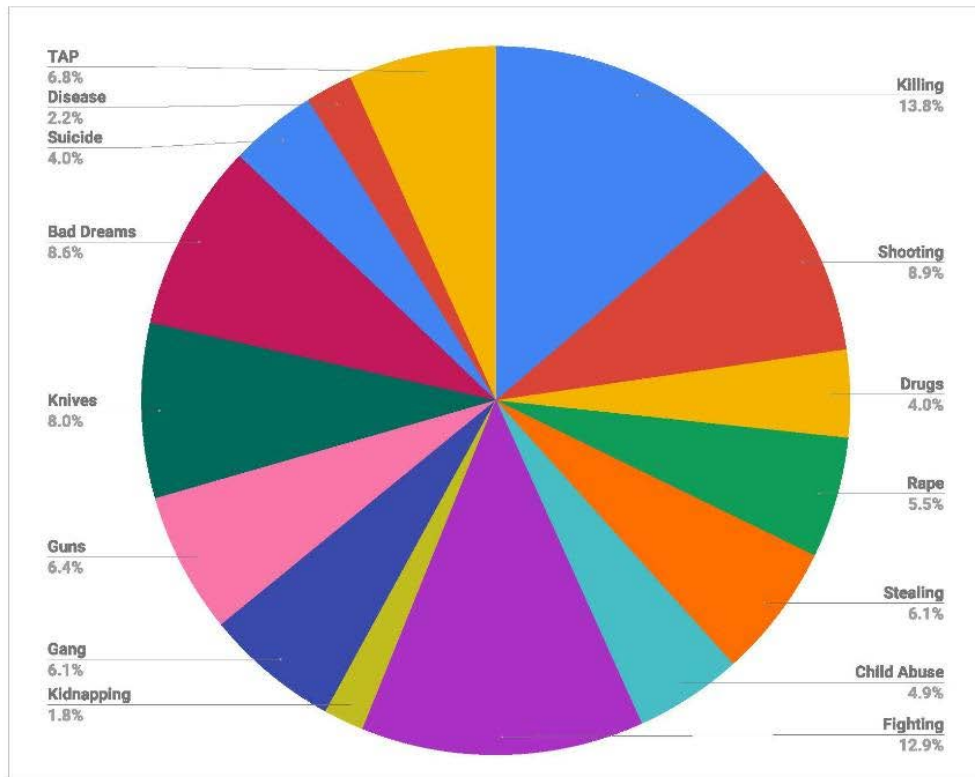
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	
Has this ever happened to you?	0	2	0	0	3	2	18	1	2	3	3	15	1	0	0	50
Has this almost happened to you?	11	4	1	2	2	0	3	1	1	3	3	2	1	0	0	34
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	21	13	10	8	8	5	10	1	8	6	4	5	7	2	9	117
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	13	10	2	8	7	9	11	3	9	9	16	6	4	5	13	125

Table 9b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



8th Grade
Table 9c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	45	13.80%
Shooting	29	8.90%
Drugs	13	3.99%
Rape	18	5.52%
Stealing	20	6.13%
Child Abuse	16	4.91%
Fighting	42	12.88%
Kidnapping	6	1.84%
Gang	20	6.13%
Guns	21	6.44%
Knives	26	7.98%
Bad Dreams	28	8.59%
Suicide	13	3.99%
Disease	7	2.15%
TAP	22	6.75%
TOTAL	326	100.00%

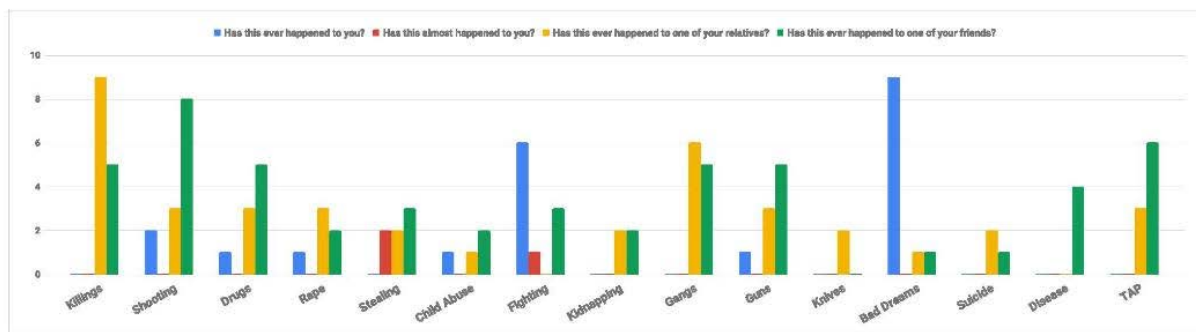


Special Ed

Table 10a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey Responses

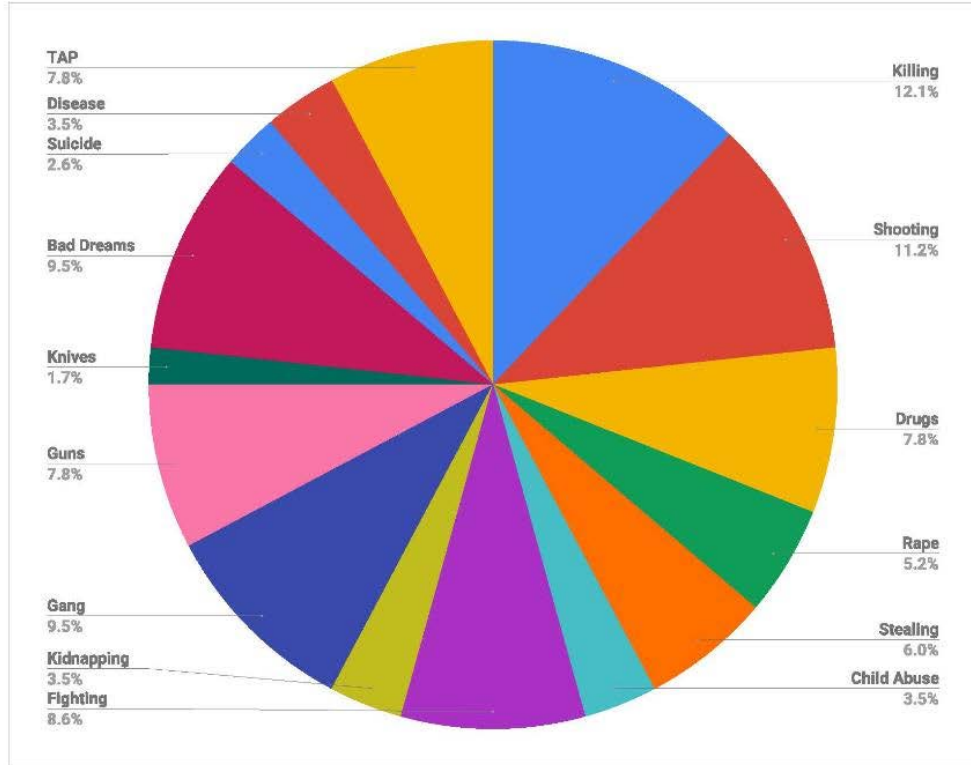
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	
Has this ever happened to you?	0	2	1	1	0	1	6	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	0	21
Has this almost happened to you?	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	9	3	3	3	2	1	0	2	6	3	2	1	2	0	3	40
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	5	8	5	2	3	2	3	2	5	5	0	1	1	4	6	52

Table 10b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



Special Ed
Table 10c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	14	12.07%
Shooting	13	11.21%
Drugs	9	7.76%
Rape	6	5.17%
Stealing	7	6.03%
Child Abuse	4	3.45%
Fighting	10	8.62%
Kidnapping	4	3.45%
Gang	11	9.48%
Guns	9	7.76%
Knives	2	1.72%
Bad Dreams	11	9.48%
Suicide	3	2.59%
Disease	4	3.45%
TAP	9	7.76%
TOTAL	116	100.00%

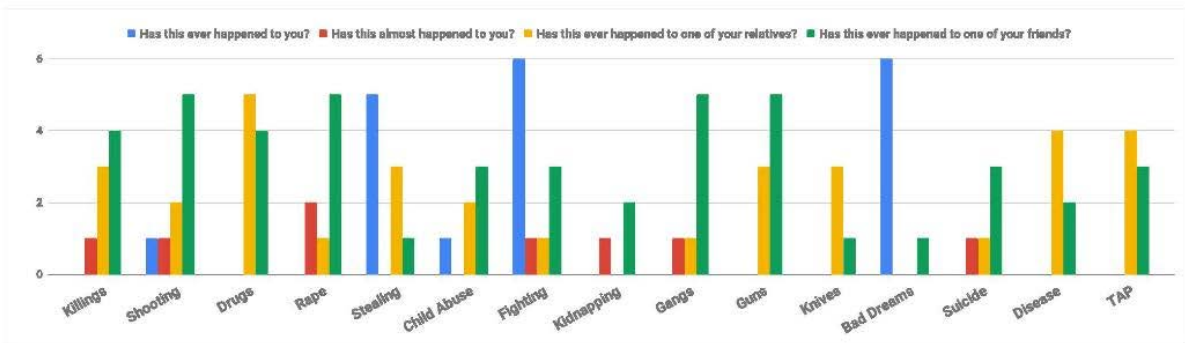


Teachers

Table 11a: Frequency of Violence Student Survey

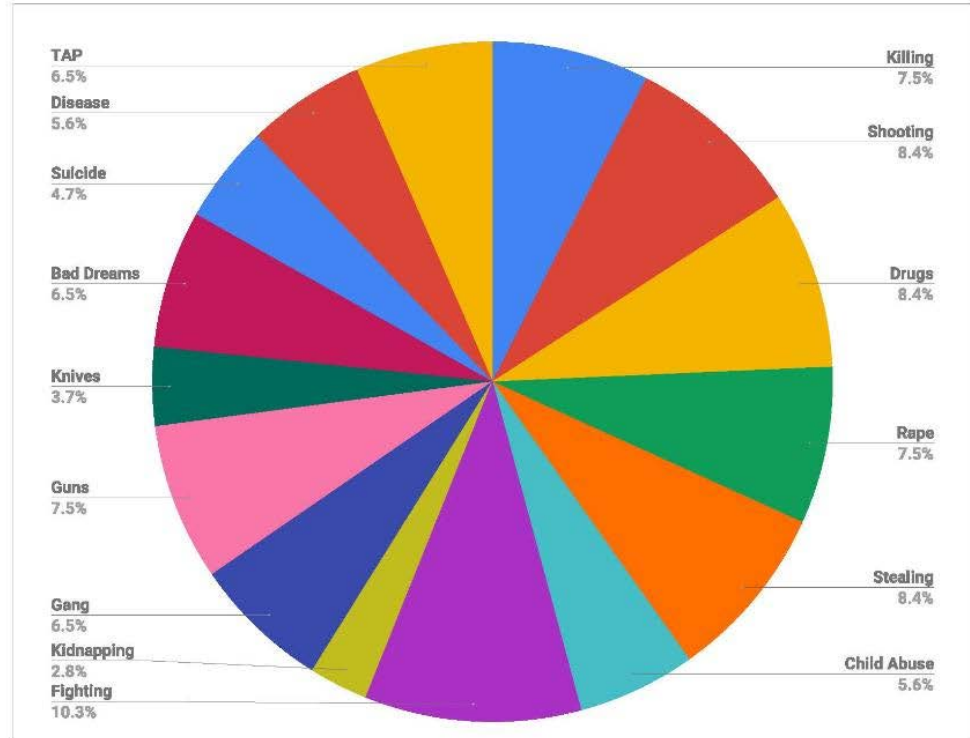
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
	Killings	Shooting	Drugs	Rape	Stealing	Child Abuse	Fighting	Kidnapping	Gangs	Guns	Knives	Bad Dreams	Suicide	Disease	TAP	TOTAL
Has this ever happened to you?	0	1	0	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	19
Has this almost happened to you?	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8
Has this ever happened to one of your relatives?	3	2	5	1	3	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	1	4	4	33
Has this ever happened to one of your friends?	4	5	4	5	1	3	3	2	5	5	1	1	3	2	3	47

Table 11b: Frequency of Violence Bar Graph



Teachers
Table 11c: Percentage of Violence Pie Chart

Type of Violence	Total	Percent
Killing	8	7.48%
Shooting	9	8.41%
Drugs	9	8.41%
Rape	8	7.48%
Stealing	9	8.41%
Child Abuse	6	5.61%
Fighting	11	10.28%
Kidnapping	3	2.80%
Gang	7	6.54%
Guns	8	7.48%
Knives	4	3.74%
Bad Dreams	7	6.54%
Suicide	5	4.67%
Disease	6	5.61%
TAP	7	6.54%
TOTAL	107	100.00%



Many thanks to Sharita Cenac and Alice Chang for their contribution to the development of these graphs and tables.

Appendix 3 Letters: From The Students to The Powers

After analyzing the responses to the surveys, the class decided that they would write letters to the powers to be. Letters were sent to:

President Bill Clinton

Senator Paul Simon

Senator Carol Mosely Brown

Governor Jim Edgar

Mayor Richard M. Daley

Superintendent CPS (Chicago Public Schools) Matt Rodriguez

Head CHA (Chicago Housing Authority) Vince Lane

The letters and replies are on the following pages:

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON,

WHERE I LIVE, WHEN YOU WALK DOWN THE STREET
YOU CAN GET INTO A FIGHT BECAUSE OF ALL THE GANG BANGERS
DRUG DEALERS ARE ALL ON THE CORNERS. BOYS ON THE CORNERS
ARE SELLING DRUGS.

THERE WAS THIS BOY WHO TOOK A GANG MEMBER'S BIKE.
ALL THE GANG MEMBERS JUMPED ON HIM.

I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO HELP STOP THE KILLING.

SINCERELY,

CONCERNED STUDENT

Dear President Clinton,

I'm a kid from the Henry Horner Homes. I live in 2215 West Lake Street. They call it a GD building, all these different gang names and things. I don't want to grow up in this waste of a world. I want to grow up in a clean, supported world. But how can I? I have gang members in front of my building and I have guns being loaded by them. My friend was confronted with a gun while she was going to the store. Do you see what I'm trying to tell you. Children in the Henry Horner Homes...we need help. We need somebody to stand up and get these bad people off the street. I wish I can go one day without somebody getting shot, killed, raped, or joining a gang. Please help this world, and most of all, Henry Horner Homes. Just help us, fast, quick, and in a hurry.

FROM A CHILD IN HENRY HORNER

Chicago, Illinois

STOP THE VIOLENCE



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1993

R. Nathaniel Dett School
Room 310
2306 West Maypole Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Dear Friend:

Thank you so much for sharing your concerns with me. I am very concerned about violence in our schools, as both a parent and the President. When young people enter the classroom, they should be allowed to concentrate solely on the job of learning, without having to be concerned for their own safety.

I am already hard at work to end school violence, but I need your help. Work hard in school, avoid drugs, and treat others with respect. Together, we can change America.

Sincerely,





Bill Clinton

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

INSIDE

The White House

Fall 1993

A Message from the President

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the first issue of *Inside the White House*. This newsletter will help keep you informed about some of the many issues being discussed here in Washington, D.C., at the White House, and on Capitol Hill.

The topics that will be featured in this newsletter are ones that young people most often write to me about in their letters. This first issue focuses on the complex subject of education.

I have worked to improve education for many years. When I was governor of Arkansas, I raised teachers' salaries and began a program of testing the basic skills of students before they enter the fourth, seventh, and ninth grades. I also encouraged parents to participate in their children's education. These initiatives were designed to ensure that every child in Arkansas would receive a quality education regardless of the size of the community or family income level. As President, I am working hard to make sure that every child in America has access to a world-class education.



When I talk about the problems that exist in our country today, I am talking about issues that directly affect you. While I can propose solutions and can sign bills into law, I need your help to make important changes. Democracy is the best form of government that we know. Still, it can only work if individuals act as participants rather than as spectators. All Americans should not only learn about our government, but also play an active role in it. Freedom is not just a right; it is a serious responsibility.

I encourage you to make a personal commitment to making life better for your neighbors and to working for the changes you want in our country.

I hope that this newsletter will help you to become interested in current events, knowledgeable about our government, and excited about learning.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Education in America

Whether you receive your education in a public school, in a private school, or at home, President Clinton believes you deserve to have a world-class education. The President is taking many exciting steps to ensure that your future is as bright as possible. He supports initiatives to prepare young children for school, to set high educational standards, to help more people attend college, and to rid schools of crime. The President wants to help you reach your full potential and achieve your goals.

GETTING A HEAD START

President Clinton understands that education begins at a young age and that all children need certain fundamental skills in order to do well in school. He also realizes that some children lack an environment that encourages them to develop their creative and analytical abilities before formal schooling begins. Unfortunately, too many children begin kindergarten already behind their peers — lacking in social and intellectual skills. **Poverty**, one of the largest problems



affecting our educational system today, is the main cause of this challenging situation.

One out of five children in America today is homeless or living in poverty. The parents of these children often cannot afford food, proper clothing, or vaccinations. Many parents do not have jobs and are not even able to provide adequate shelter for their family. All of these concerns take time away from the parents' involvement in their children's education.

Dear Senator Paul Simon,

We need help in the Henry Horners! We need more police because innocent people are getting killed. Please lock up the people who are selling these drugs . At night I can't sleep because of the noise of a gun.

One kid got killed; he was only 15 years old and I knew him. Some of my other friends are getting killed. This is why me and my classmates are asking for your help. We need the help bad because we dowant that killing to happen to us. The police that over here are not doing a thing about the drugs going around them. They will see the people selling the drugs; they won't do anything about it. They will get the drugs for themselves. So please help us!

From a 6th grade kid
at the Dett School

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., DELAWARE, CHAIRMAN
EDWARD M. KENNEDY, MASSACHUSETTS
HOWARD M. METZENBAUM, OHIO
DENNIS DeCONCINI, ARIZONA
PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
HOWELL HEFLIN, ALABAMA
PAUL SIMON, ILLINOIS
HERBERT KOHL, WISCONSIN
DIANNE FEINSTEIN, CALIFORNIA
CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, ILLINOIS

ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH
STROM THURMOND, SOUTH CAROLINA
ALAN K. SIMPSON, WYOMING
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA
ARLEN SPECTER, PENNSYLVANIA
HANK BROWN, COLORADO
WILLIAM S. COHEN, MAINE
LARRY PRESSLER, SOUTH DAKOTA

CYNTHIA C. HOGAN, CHIEF COUNSEL
CATHERINE M. RUSSELL, STAFF DIRECTOR
MARK R. DISLER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
SHARON PROST, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

December 21, 1993

Room 310
R. Nathaniel Dett School
2306 W. Maypole Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

Dear Students:

Thank you all for sending your letters to me. I appreciated hearing from each of you.

Because of your stories, and those of many other Illinoisians who have witnessed the gang problem directly, I have been working at the federal level to find solutions to the gang problem. In 1988, I authored a law for a Gang Prevention Grant Program to steer kids away from a life of crime by providing federal money for community-based intervention and prevention programs. In addition, last year Congress passed a bill I introduced to establish the "Early Gang Prevention Center Grant Program" to encourage elementary school age children in schools and housing projects away from gang involvement.

As you may know, the Senate recently approved the so-called "Crime Bill", which includes provisions that address gang violence. The bill would allow stronger punishments for criminals who use children to distribute drugs and would create additional penalties for crimes committed by gang members. And, I am pleased that the crime bill would also grant federal funds for youth gang enforcement and prevention grants. To successfully combat the problem of gangs and drug abuse, everyone must do their part -- not just law enforcers, but parents and teachers and students as well. We all need to work together to reach out to these youth at risk and send them a strong message that drugs are harmful, that gang life is a dead end.

In your letters, some of you mentioned friends and acquaintances who have been killed. I wish there was something I could do to bring back these lives, but the best I can do is to continue working hard to make sure that no more young lives are taken -- that our schools and neighborhoods are free of violence. And I will do my best to see that this happens.

Again, thank you all for taking the time to write and express your concerns. I am always particularly pleased when young adults express their views. Many people believe that their

Senators and Representatives are the only ones responsible for making the laws and improving our society. This is not true. We need your help. Each one of us must do all we can to understand and affect the world around us. By writing a letter to your Senator, you have each shared part of that responsibility. I hope you will all be in touch in the future on other matters of concern or interest to you.

My best wishes.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Simon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul Simon
United States Senator

PS/kvh

2306 W Maypole
Chicago, IL 60612
November 10, 1993

Dear Governor Edgar,

Why are Harmful Things Happening In this World ?

Harmful things are happening in this world because young teenagers are joining gangs . They are doing this because no one took time out to raise them up right and teach them right from wrong . They have to learn and understand they are killing their own black brothers and sisters . Recently Lazerick Eggleston, a student in my school, had a gun shot wound to his chest by a blind bullet. He died in Cook County Hospital .

All this violence going on in this world need not to go on . I wish it would stop and I wish it would stop now! People are scared to even go to the store because of the violence going on in this world today and in our city of Chicago. Innocent people getting shot and killed over something they didn't do .

Even though we all stop to think about what's going on in this world today, drugs and gangs are our most concern . Children can't even go to school because of the killing and fighting over a lot of things: even we young people don't understand. Even though our parents and teachers talk to us about the outrage of violence and crime today we don't listen, but take it our consideration and try to do something about it. This world is in a war beyond the streets of today. What can we do about it? As we watch out of our window, and the cars go pass, and people crossing the streets, I wonder what they are thinking. Why is there so much hurt inside their bodies that they don't share or talk to any one about it ? But yet they kill their own brother over something that's not theirs . I wish people would stop destroying their lives and think about their future. I want them to know even if someone doesn't love them God will always love them. Now things are getting worse and worse as we sit and look at the Henry Horner Housing development right here across from my school. Every day there are people getting hurt or killed. They are always running around school with guns. Why can't any one do something about it? The more we sit around the more they 're going to destroy all of us. The gang members need to stop destroying little children's lives by doing drive by shootings. Why are young teenagers dropping out of school and joining gangs? Why can't they try to go back to school ? And walk across the stage with a diploma and feeling proud of themselves. I wish they send someone to stop this. Can't you as the Governor do SOMETHING!?

Sincerely,

A concerned student



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD 62706

JIM EDGAR
GOVERNOR

January 11, 1994

R. Nathaniel Dett School
Room 310
2306 West Maypole Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Dear Students:

I have read your letters regarding gang violence and the tragic injury to innocent bystanders.

While dysfunctional families are not the sole reason young people engage in gang activity, unstable households, combined with other problems such as poor education, unemployment, peer pressure, status and idleness have contributed to the problem of gang violence.

Because there is no single cause, there is no single cure to this issue. Law enforcement, parents, academics, social service agencies and religious leaders are all part of the solution. Consequently, I have instructed my executive branch departments to coordinate their programs that deal with gangs and gang violence.

The Illinois State Police has taken a leadership role to encourage coordinated efforts among other law enforcement agencies. Additionally, State Police personnel address civic groups, law enforcement personnel and teachers about recognizing gang members and those at risk of joining a gang.

I appreciate your concerns regarding this issue and remind you that together we will make a difference by ensuring a secure future for Illinois' youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Edgar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Edgar
GOVERNOR

JE:rf

Dear Mayor Daley,

The killing needs to stop. The children need help in Henry Horner Homes. There is shooting every day, even when children are going to school. Three boys got shot over drug money. The children need your help. Children like me love school. Some of us kids would not like to mess up our education. Some children want to be senators, mayors, governors, or even president.

4 Section 2 Chicago Tribune, Sunday, November 21, 1993 ***

Chicago

Boy accidentally shoots himself

An 11-year-old West Side boy

was in critical condition Saturday night at Cook County Hospital after accidentally shooting himself in the chest, police said.

Harrison Area violent crimes Sgt. Monroe Vollick said Mark Handfield of the 2200 block of West Lake Street shot himself just before 7 p.m. after receiving the gun from a 16-year-old youth.

Vollick said the boy was given the gun to hold or to hide.

He said police were continuing to investigate the incident.

From: A Sixth Grade Male From

Dett School

(Right across the street

from Henry Horner)

*Mark cannot sign
this letter since he is presently
in the hospital.
J. McCarthy
Teacher
11-22-93*

Dear Mayor Daley,

In this kind of neighborhood I am living in, it is a lot of
violence and it doesn't make any sense since they are selling
drugs and the

only thing they are doing is killing themselves.

I wish they

stop what they are doing and when I'm in the house
like at night.

They are shooting and I don't like it.

I wish that my mother

would find a good place to live and a nice neighborhood

to live in. In this city it doesn't make any sense since children and grown ups
are dying and I want it to stop and

it is very bad how people have been shot in the Henry Horner projects and sometimes
when we come from school it is bad that they wait till we get in the house and
and they start shooting and we can't go to the

junior high gym and

go places we want to go because of their shooting

and it makes me

sick with what they are doing and it has been two people
that died in

in the Henry Horner and it doesn't make any sense
that they have

things like that in their minds and they need to
stop the violence

and I hope they stop.

By

Dear Mayor Daley,

Hip hop on some bad news! Corey was shot in the back two times!!!
I was looking out the window. I saw the boys run back in the building.
We need some help! We need you to do us a favor. Can you stop the shooting?

A 6th Grade Boy from

Dett School
Right across the street from Henry Horner!

Dear Mayor Daley,

I am from Dett School. I want to know . . . did you hear about
the shooting that's going around ? I have some friends that got shot.
There are people that sell drugs to one another in front of my house .
It's so bad that the only thing I can do is join a gang, or the members
will beat you up . I know people in the gang. They say they want to
get out and go to church, but they say they can't. They say they can
get killed if they get out, but I don't know ... I might get in the gang.
I hope I don't .

PLEASE STOP THE VIOLENCE
FROM A PERSON THAT CARES
FROM DETT SCHOOL

Dear Mayor Daley,

The gang members need to stop killing innocent children. The children have their future ahead of them. Their mothers will be hurt when they see their children faces on the front pages of the newspaper. What if it was me? My mother and grandmother would cry forever! They must stop the violence. If you can't stop it somebody has to because, it doesn't make any sense.

Please Put A Stop To It

Stop The Violence

By A Sixth Grade Female Student

Dett School

2306 W. Maypole - Chicago

Dear Mayor Daley,

I want to tell you about my neighborhood. It is pitiful the way children are dying because Blacks are killing one another. Last night, they were shooting; one person was killed. I'd like for you to help get drugs out of the neighborhood and off the streets of Chicago.

A Student At Dett School

Dear Mayor Daley,

A child got shot by a ignorant man for no reason. I hope they put him in jail for life. It's stupid, all the killing and bullets flying across the sky every day we go outside. We need more help, instead of violence. I wish they could stop killing one another. A bullet can't see . . . a bullet meant for another could hit me or you.

We Need More Police at the Henry Horner Homes

A Student From Dett School

(Right across the street from Henry Horner!)



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

December 7, 1993

Mr. Lawrence McCarthy and Class
Room 310 - R. Nathaniel Dett School
2306 West Maypole Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Dear Mr. McCarthy and Class:

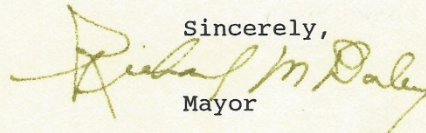
Thank you for your recent letters in which you express your concerns about violence in your neighborhood.

During my tenure as State's Attorney for Cook County, my chief focus was on crime. As Mayor, I have taken on a much broader responsibility. I have reached out to all communities in many ways enlisting their assistance in my efforts to make Chicago a safer place. Last month, I announced a comprehensive package of crime legislation that I will introduce in Springfield next year. It is one of the broadest packages of crime legislation every presented by the City of Chicago, and will give us more of the tools we need to strengthen our communities and deal more effectively with the issues of gangs, drugs, guns and the juvenile justice system.

However, I am not waiting for next year to take action. We are fighting back in a series of neighborhood-based approaches, under the umbrella of community policing. Specifically, my plan calls for phasing-in community policing to each of Chicago's police districts by hiring 400 new police officers and reassigning another 400 police officers currently performing non-patrol duties. I have and will continue to call on the federal and state governments to increase support for anti-drug programs and stricter gun control laws.

There are no simple solutions. As Mayor, it is my responsibility to do everything within my power to provide for the security of the people of this city. However, protecting and securing our communities is a responsibility that we all must share. We will not solve the problems overnight or without the cooperation and support of community organizations and individual citizens. In that spirit, I appreciate your willingness to share your views.

Sincerely,


Mayor

Dear Vincent Lane,

Today in the 90's, people are getting murdered,raped,and kidnapped. Everywhere you go you see the same thing, people doing drugs or women on the streets selling their bodies for money. Just about a year ago a man by the name of Roc got killed. People had to come and pick up their kids at school because of the shooting. That's how bad it was. When you come home you see people under the building doing drugs or selling them .

Today in the 90's people can't even go outside and play without shooting . Over the past weeks they have been shooting; it's a shame how people start shooting and kill innocent people. You are not safe anywhere. They kill innocent people like little kids when they are shooting. They almost shot my cousin. If he were to get shot and die that would be one gone and more to go.

When they kill they are killing their own people.
We lost many in the past and we have many to go.
Little ones are getting snatched. men are going to jail for life because of what they have done. It's sad to see one go.
People get killed all over the nation, in the country and city you are not safe here or anywhere.

Who's Going To Be Next ??

A Female Student From Dett School

Dear Vincent Lane,

I am a citizen of America and I don't like what's happening. I'm not just talking about where I live , Henry Horner Homes, I'm talking about everywhere.

Guns, drugs, and poison are destroying this world. Bad TV programs are also affecting this world. I just want to begin with Chicago, Illinois.

Please do something. Do something because it affects the people who live here in Chicago, and I am one of them.

So I am writing you to ask you to do something and do it now, because it's not going to get any better. So if you care you would do all you can because I don't think you're doing enough to stop it, or you're just not doing your job.

A concerned student from Dett School

P.S. Please do something with Henry Horner Projects or
drugs and guns will take over.

Dear Vincent Lane,

There is lots of violence in this world, because of young teenagers joining gangs. They are doing this because they don't have any consideration for our environment , or for our younger children. I wish that it can be peace on earth. And let us experience what the world has to offer.

Gang Violence Should Be Stopped!

Concerned Student

November 10, 1993

Dear Mr. Lane,

Gang Warfare! While walking down the stairs in the Henry Horner housing development, I was confronted with a gun and I ran. It was a gang member, a man, who scared me half to death.

Why is gang warfare happening? Maybe people don't care enough to stand up to the gang members. Suppose this was in Schaumburg. Police would be there in a wink of an eye. But why not here??

My point is, we all need to stick together. One day we will need each other. We need help now, not later when another is killed by a stray bullet. Save the future.

A concerned student!

Dear Mr. Lane,

There are so many people getting killed because of gangs. The guards aren't doing any thing about it. My sister would have gotten her head blown off if she didn't do what the gang members said. Someone needs to come put a stop to it and throw them in prison. But why are our people dying because of guns? Why do they even make guns.

PLEASE SEND HELP!

6th Grade Student From Dett School

2306 W. Maypole

Chicago, Illinois 60612



The Chicago Housing Authority

Board of Commissioners

Vincent Lane
Chairman

Artensa Randolph
Vice-Chairman

Arthur M. Brazier
Milton Davis
Isaac S. Goldman
Handy L. Lindsey, Jr.
Daniel Solis

Robert Whitfield
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Daniel W. Blue, Jr.
Deputy Chief Operating Officer

F. Willis Caruso
General Counsel

December 20, 1993

R. Nathaniel Dett School
Room 310
2306 West Maypole Avenue
Chicago IL 60612

Dear Room 310 Students:


Thank you for your letters letting me know your feelings about the conditions that exist in your neighborhood. Please know that I share your concerns.

At the Chicago Housing Authority, we are working very hard to try to make the community safer. For example, we have coordinated with the Chicago Police Department and the CHA Police to increase protection for our residents. It is important for you to work with your parents and other adults to be involved in your community and make positive change.

I appreciate all your suggestions. There is one other important thing you can do to help: stay in school. Becoming educated men and women is your most important responsibility and challenge. By fulfilling your dreams and setting examples for other people in Horner and everywhere you will take control of your destiny.

Thank you again for expressing your concerns to me. Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a New Year that brings peace and joy.

Sincerely,


Vincent Lane, Chairman
Chicago Housing Authority

Dear Carol Mosely Braun:

Never Take Life For a Joke

Who's going to be next? Is it going to be me? You? Who? In the Henry Horner homes you can never tell who's going to be next; it can be anybody. This is about how we take life for a joke; we take it for granted like using dope.

How come we don't understand how to cherish life. God gave us a gift so why not use it right. Why can't we all get along; it's time for all of us to be set free but my brothers and sisters want to see. We need to get rid of the stereotype.... yes we can do more then shoot dice. WE can give and share, and love ... so why not start all of the above.

Senator Braun, Please help the Henry Horner Homes

Sincerely,

A female six grade student

No Response from Senator Carol Mosely Braun

Dear Superintendent Rodriguez:

It is no fun to pick up a gun. When someone gets shot it's all on you because of the bad things going around us. People are forcing people to shoot one another. Babies are dying in the cross fire. I am telling you there's no sunlight in our city. I can be the next one to get shot and die. It might be my mother or my dad. I hear security doesn't do anything, and the police don't come. All I want is someone to help us.

The people don't let us grow up like we want to grow up with jobs, not selling drugs. We don't want to be policemen that don't come. We want to be firemen that come at the right time of the day.

All I Want Is Someone To Help Us

A 6th Grade Boy

Dear Superintendent Matt Rodriguez,

Around here in the Henry Horner projects there are so many people getting killed in the shootouts. Why does it have to be us kids? Our parents didn't bring us in this wonderful world to live and die...to go just like that.

Just this passed Saturday, my classmate Mark shot himself. That could be really lucky because he didn't die.

So please come and do something about it.
Please send more police.

A Female Student From Dett School

No Response from Superintendent Matt Rodriguez

Conclusion

The personal value of this survey along with their written letters was perhaps a catharsis for the students; that is, a relief of emotions from their environment of violence. I imagine that it also affected me in that manner. I saw this with the excitement of my students. It was apparent to me that they were getting something out of it themselves by putting these fifteen categories of violence on paper. The act of going in teams to the various classrooms and explaining the survey to the students and teachers instilled a leadership role. Writing letters to governmental leaders gave voice to their need for a solution to violence surrounding them. One of the students expressed well his experience when he was explaining the survey to a class. The teacher asked him questions about the survey and how it began. He told me that he was excited about answering her questions, but more importantly, he felt that he taught a teacher something.

Retrospect

In the upper cycles it was exciting to watch student groups take ownership of presenting a lesson to the class. Their collaborations were remarkable. The focus was always on those who were not achieving, those still struggling trying to achieve, and those who needed a bit of understanding, words of encouragement and a gentle push in the right direction. We must work with those who have so many problems, the quitters, and the ones overwhelmed by the negativity of their environment and the segments of our society that have kept doors closed to them. An example was my son, blessed with high intelligence, and who as a five-year-old determined his destiny, but still had so many hurdles to overcome to achieve what he has accomplished.

JoAnn Brown of the Educational Leadership Institute telling me that I'm a risk taker. "No! No! But yes, maybe! Had I scorned risk? In looking back, yes, perhaps I did. Did it help me gain a new awareness of myself? Perhaps, the courage 'to keep on keeping on' as Dr. Ferris fostered. But then how does one understand the reality of what risk really is? This risk factor is the reality of where the focus of this journal began - our adoption endeavor i.e., adopting a boy from Panama.

An editor stated and queried: "It's too nice!" "Were there no problems?" "Yes of course, the good, bad and ugly did exist as it does in all institutions. I can talk (write) about the good and bad, but I have a hard time relating the ugly. Ugly has made headlines forever. During my first 14 years there were fourteen student deaths. After that I stopped counting, but they continued.

Would my sister, brother and I turn out the same as we are now, if we had to confront what today's children are subjected to. Hmmm!

We teachers were a team of professional educators doing our best to elevate the mindset of our students, to a greater achievement level for their better future. My colleague Barbara came next to me at the podium because she saw that I couldn't hold the mike and my sheets of speech at the same time. I liked that because in the five years that I'd known her, we seemed to think ahead of each other. As I was giving my goodbye talk, tears came from some of the students, as well as Barbara and I. When I finished, I felt good, because...tears are good. Tears are for happiness and sadness, but more importantly for relationships.

Well, the above chapters have been my views from behind the desk and with my back to the chalkboard. It would be interesting to hear the views of my former charges. Of course, my views have no doubt been embellished with time.

Then to the finality. It was both their day, and my day. It was their graduation, and my retirement. We had been together for the last three years. Now we were going in different directions. When addressing them and their parents, and beginning my talk was the message that, "I won't miss you!" There was the expected gasp.

My explanation to them was that when my mother had passed on years earlier, I knew that I would miss her. A most unusual reality came to me quite a few years later. I didn't miss her. After working this out in my mind, the realization came that I didn't miss her because she was still with me. There was hardly a day that she didn't pop up in my mind for one reason or another. She had made such an impression on me that I didn't realize until then the great impact that she had had on my life.

"My dear students: That is why I won't miss you. You have had a great impact on my life." So, to the tune of "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" by Pete Seeger, here are a few verses that would apply to my query: "Where Have All My Children Gone?" I've been in touch with a few of my former students, but what about those, oh, so many others?

Where Have All My Children Gone?

Where have all my children gone, since chalkboard learning?

Where have all my children gone, since chalkboard dust?

Where have all my young boys gone? The Lord has spread them everywhere.

Where have all my young girls gone? The Lord has led them everywhere.

Oh, did they really learn? Oh, yes, yes, they all did learn.

Will I see them anymore? Yes, yes, in my dreams.

Will I see them anymore? Yes, yes, in my fading memory.

We'll all be moving on, as is the master plan.

We'll all be moving on, please Lord guide us on.

Oh, what of all that they have learned?

Oh, they have learned to pass it on.

Oh, to pass it on!

Addendum

To Former Students of Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School.

As a former teacher at Dett for 30 years I'm often reminded of my students and the positive impact that they had on my life. I taught from 1970 thru 1999. I've been writing a personal journal about my experiences at Dett when my back was to the chalkboard. I'm at the stage now where I'm curious about your experiences as a former student of Dett, and the impact I and other teachers had upon your life.

This survey will cover the 'equity of education' or 'educational environment' for up to four generations. How does your parents' education compare to yours? How do you feel about the educational opportunities of your children, and if it applies, your grandchildren? Also, the impact that teachers had upon you.

I would appreciate it if you would fill out the attached survey. It doesn't matter if you had me as a teacher. It is your experience at Dett that is important.

To complete the survey, log on to: www.idellmccarthyfoundarion.org/chalktalk2
or mail to the address below:

Lawrence McCarthy
701 Main St. #6520
Evanston, IL 60204B

- For security purposes your name is optional.
- All information will be confidential and used only for this survey.
- Please forward this survey to family members, friends and classmates who are alumni of Dett.

Thank you!

Lawrence (Larry) McCarthy

Survey of former Students of Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School

Personal Information

- 1. Male ___ Female ___
- 2. Circle age bracket: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 and older
- 3. Did you graduate from the 6th grade cycle? Yes ___ What year? _____ No ___
- 4. Did you graduate from the 8th grade cycle? Yes ___ What year? _____ No ___
- 5. Did you move and attend another school? Yes ___ What grade? _____ No ___

Education (You may select more than one answer. Write Additional Comments on page 3)

- 6. How would you rate the teachers? Excellent ___ Good ___ Bad ___ Indifferent ___
- 7. How would you rate yourself then, as a student?
Excellent ___ Good ___ Bad ___ Indifferent ___
- 8. Did the teachers have a positive ___ or negative ___ impact on your life?
- 9. Did the teachers help you with your school problems?.....Yes.....No ___
- 10. Did the teachers help you with your personal problems?....Yes ___ ..No ___
- 11. Did you receive enough skills to learn:
English (reading, writing, grammar, spelling) Yes ___ No ___
Mathematics Yes ___ No ___
Science Yes ___ No ___
Social Studies Yes ___ No ___
- 12. Did you have enough homework? Yes ___ No ___
- 13. Did you have too much testing? Yes ___ No ___

School Environment

- 14. From your experience, what kind of school was Dett:
Excellent ___ Good ___ Bad ___ Indifferent ___
- 15. Did you feel safe at Dett School? Yes ___ No ___
- 16. Did you have enough of the following to do assignments?
Supplies – paper, pens, pencils... Yes ___ No ___
Books - Yes ___ No ___
Equipment (computers, etc) Yes ___ No ___
- 17. Did you like the Officer Friendly visits in the primary classes? Yes ___ No ___
- 18. Did you like the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in 6th grade?
Yes ___ No ___ Not offered during my attendance ___

Living Environment

- 19. How would you rate your living environment? Excellent ___ Good ___ Bad ___ Indifferent ___
- 20. Circle how safe you felt in the Horner environment. (#1 Not Safe #10 Very Safe)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

21. How did you feel about the police in the Horner Community? (#1 Very Bad #10 Very Good)
 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10
22. Did this environment interfere with your schoolwork? Yes ___ No ___ (See C. page 3.)

Your Highest Level of Education Completed

23. High School Yes ___ No ___If yes, how many years attended? ___
24. Trade School or Training Program Yes ___ No ___ .If yes, how many years attended? ___
25. Community College.. Yes ___ No___If yes, how many years attended? ___
26. UniversityYes ___ No___If yes, how many years attended? ___
27. Bachelor’s DegreeYes ___ No___.....If yes, how many years attended?___
28. Master’s Degree.....Yes ___ No___.....If yes, how many years attended?___
29. DoctorateYes ___ No___.....If yes, how many years attended?___

Employment

30. Are you or have you been employed? Yes ___ No ___
31. If yes for question 30 , how long have you been employed in all jobs? _____

Family

32. Do you have children?.....Yes ___ No ___
33. Do/did you think that your children have/had the same problems you had in school?
 With teachers?.....Yes ___ No ___
 With school environment?...Yes ___ No ___
 With living environment?.....Yes ___ No ___
34. Do you have grandchildren? Yes ___ No ___
35. Do you think that your grandchildren have/had the same problems you had in school?
 With teachers?.....Yes ___ No ___
 With school environment?.....Yes___ No ___
 With living environment?.....Yes___ No ___

Generational Comparisons

36. Do you have more education than your parents?.....Yes ___ No ___
37. Have your children finished high school or are they still attending?.....Yes ___ No ___
38. Have your children finished college or are they still attending?.....Yes ___ No ___
39. Have your grandchildren finished college or are they still attending.... .Yes___ No ___
40. Are you doing better financially than your parents?.....Yes___ No___
41. Have your children done better financially than you?.....Yes ___ No ___
42. Have your grandchildren done better financially than their parents.....Yes ___ No ___
43. Circle how safe you feel in your present community. (#1 Not Safe #10 Very Safe)
 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
44. How do you feel about police in your present community? (#1 Very Bad #10 Very Good)
 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10

45. Do you see a good future?.....Yes __ No __
46. Do your children see a good future?.....Yes __ No __
47. Do your grandchildren see a good future?.....Yes __ No __

Optional questions, explain if you like:

A. What are your best memories of Dett? _____

B. What are your worst memories of Dett? _____

C. Referring to question 22 above, how did the Horner environment affect your schoolwork?

D. Describe your employment. _____

E. How do you think teachers today should handle the problems you had as a student? _____

F. What do you think makes a good school? _____

G. How do you see your future? _____

Additional Comments: (If you need more space, add an attachment.)

Thank you!

