

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

June 22-28, 2018

HUMPTY DUMPTY HOUSING - Part 18



ARE THESE INNOCENT FACES FUTURE FRIENDS OR SERIAL KILLERS?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

ATTENDING the first ever Central Coast Foster Youth & Homeless Education Forum at Cabrillo College in Aptos on June 12 was a shocking eye opener as the non-political event made me realize:

If the Trump administration doesn't act fast to resolve the message it's sending—"You aren't wanted"—thousands of immigrant children now being kept in cage-like enclosures or warehouse-like Walmarts could grow into a future generation of rebel fighters and/or mass murderers of our own making!

Workshop presenter James Wogan, MFT, LCSW, PPSC, pointed out that “Children impacted by trauma have unique educational, social, emotional and behavioral needs. . . 1 out of 5 children has a diagnosable mental health issue.” Only 20 percent get the help they need.

The tragic dilemma affecting children torn from their parents' arms or separated from guardians and sponsors, is so strong the Republican party is starting to split over what to do.

Representative Kevin Yoder, R-Kansas, chairman of the House Homeland Security Appropriation Subcommittee, urged Attorney General Jeff Sessions last Monday to end the separation policy at our southern border.

Yoder said, “As the son of a social worker, I know the human trauma that comes with children being separated from their parents. It takes a lasting, and sometimes even irreversible toll, toll on the child's well being. That's why I'm demanding that Attorney General Sessions halt the practice of family separation at the border immediately as Congress works toward legislative solutions.”

On Wednesday, President Trump issued an executive order to end separation but keep zero tolerance policies in force because “You would have a run in this country, the likes of which we've never seen..”

How Much Damage Can Separation Cause?

Purpose of the educational summit at Cabrillo College was to address the needs of local homeless and foster youths in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties.

In their workshop on Education Law: Rights and Responsibilities, Darius Brown, Santa Clara, COE, and Justin Parker, Monterey COE, revealed that in 2016-2017, Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito county schools reported serving over 17,000 homeless students.

Under California's McKinney-Vento Act, our immigrant-friendly version of "No Child Left Behind," no school-age child can be denied enrollment in public school. As Parker said, "It's enroll first, work on documentation later."

Homeless education in Monterey County will be further explored next week.

Freeing People From The Outcast System

C. Jonathan Shoemaker of Carmel taught in the Monterey-Santa Cruz schools for 32 years. He advocates a system called "Just Say Hi" inspired by "Eleanor Rigby (All the Lonely People)" lyrics by Beatle Paul McCartney, excerpted here from the forthcoming July 2018 edition of Scribbles, newsletter of Central Coast Writers:

"Where do they all come from?"

By C. Jonathan Shoemaker

Throughout thirty-two years of teaching grades seven through twelve in well-to-do communities, as well as in low income, I have encountered a few young people who fit the profile of serial killers.

Where do they all come from? Maybe we create them by not acknowledging their existence. . . not acknowledging their identity and dignity, closing them off from our society . . . we can't tell who will reach the breaking point, or when. But I believe there is a way to assuage the hopeless feelings of some potential mass murderers and save hundreds of lives.

In the 90s a very savvy principal at Alisal High School got kids to discuss how we can "leave disrespect in the hood."

Be Friendly To Everyone

It worked. Gang problems ceased on campus.

Most kids met at least one person who demonstrated respect for them, freeing them from the outcast syndrome..

. . . If group support and mutual respect helped to change the behavior of gangsters in school, maybe it would help to bolster the self-image of a potential mass murderer and protect our children from impending danger.

Remember When You Were The New Kid On The Block?

If numerous people smiled and said "Hi". . . somehow the feeling of being an outcast left you; replaced with a subconscious feeling of "I am! . . . I count! I belong here."

It's just a smile, a nod, a "Hello." That's all! But if this concept somehow went viral and . . . our society formed "Just Say Hi" groups and acknowledged the existence of "all the lonely people", could we give that "I am" feeling to some of them? Could we save kids who commit suicide, or give homeless people a feeling of self-worth?

We can't accurately predict if a person will be the next mass murderer, but we might be able to stop one person from becoming one. . .

. . . Kids at school could form "Just Say Hi" groups. . . We needn't stop to visit, or get personally involved with strangers we pass on the street. Just say "Hi". . . would you be willing to try it; even if, at first glance, it sounds silly, idealistic and naive?

It certainly couldn't hurt. Could it?

This is beyond politics. It's heart-to-heart humanity at its best!

Contact C. Jonathan Shoemaker at cjscarmel@aol.com .

OUTSIDE THE BOX

*"What subjects do you teach?"
he asked. And I, as usual
in my unusual way,
defied the nature of the question,
spoke directly to the point.*

*"I teach kids," I said.
He said, "Kids aren't subjects."
"No," said I, "nor should they be.
Especially in this land of ours.
In a democracy.*

*I'm not a king, nor are they subjects,
So I treat them with respect.
In my room they learn about the world,
How to succeed, what to expect."*

*"I'm only asking what you do.
Not for a drawn-out speech.
I know that you're a teacher.
What subjects do you teach?"*

*I said, "You label me, file me away.
I guess that's good enough for you.
To me what matters more than
what you're called
is what you do."*

C. Jonathan Shoemaker, Carmel
(Retired after 32-years of teaching in
Monterey/Santa Cruz County Schools)

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