

King & Low-Heywood Thomas School

KLHT

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Dear Peggy,

May 15, 2007

While planning our exhibit launch in each of our divisions including; In Our Family, Of Many Colors and Road to Freedom, we wanted to find a way to somehow bring the photos to life and to learn about the life origin of Family Diversity Projects. Your presentation to our Upper School students and invited students from a neighboring school, who previously had one of the exhibits, was both inspiring and compelling. After hearing your personal story about your unique and special family makeup, the students quickly understood the impetus behind the importance of diversity education and personal growth. With this energy they were especially attentive observing the mock interview you conducted with one of our faculty members.

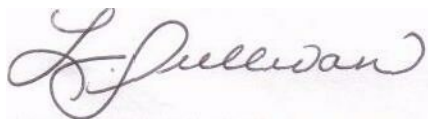
The care and thoughtfulness you displayed during this workshop was reassuring. Our students felt safe to contribute to the discussion about "what makes a family" and negated the skewed notion of the term "normal." Our students were able to open up and share hurtful comments they have heard throughout their lives and left the workshop with a renewed sense of purpose and conviction in combating the stereotypes and the "isms," which are still present in our society.

It is always a challenge to get teen-aged students to open up and speak from difficult places, but after the interview, which walked them through a series of questions and life experience-based answers, they began to personalize the real stories and people behind the interview. Not only was it interesting to hear about another's life revealed, but the respectful process by which, Family Diversity Projects follows to serve as educators without exploitation, modeled for our kids how to take similar risks.

Needless to say, there were few dry eyes in the room during the workshop and we are very grateful for your innate ability to read the audience, pace the information appropriately and for being so giving of yourself.

King & Low-Heywood Thomas School will feel your presence here on campus for some time to come.

Warm Regards,



Lynn Sullivan M.S. Ed, Dean of Community Affairs  
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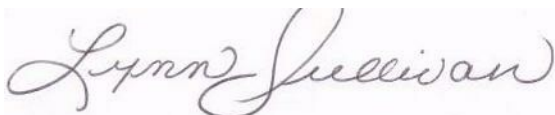
Thank you for the thoughtful workshop you held for our faculty during our Professional Growth & Development Day. Commanding the attention of over one hundred (K-12 grade) faculty members with your respectful and calming demeanor, made the often-challenging discussions about diversity, resonate so personally with each of us. You brought us to a place where we could reflect upon where we are on the continuum of diversity work, while reserving judgment and acknowledging that this work takes courage, strong leadership yet knowing the importance of a school's barometer for institutional change.

Sharing your personal story, created a sense of safety as we moved through the balance of a very full agenda throughout the day. You reminded us that "the work" represents real people and honest experiences from which we must be mindful of in our daily work with children. The exercise asking teachers and administrators to mentally illustrate descriptors of our identity, then simulating an experience of removing all of the qualities that make us unique and remain unable to ever express them again—brought about an outpouring of real emotions from our adult community. For many, they made the instant connections to what it might feel like for students everywhere when "hiding" many elements of themselves including religious affiliations, family makeup and sexual orientation. For a moment, we all found commonality in experiencing the fear, anxiety, frustration & resentment that often accompanies an individual when they feel isolated for any number of reasons.

We thank you for acknowledging King & Low-Heywood Thomas School as an institution who moves its diversity policy into action and for recognizing that for us, the decision to bring three exhibits to our school walls was indeed a step in the right direction.

Thank you on behalf of KLHT and for all of lives your exhibits and your message have touched.

With Warm Regards,



Lynn Sullivan M.S. Ed, Dean of Community Affairs King & Low-Heywood Thomas School

