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Conflict resolution at the Monterey Bay Charter School

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Sharon – Jean Levitt

May 15, 2009

CHHS 400B: Senior Capstone

Adrienne Saxton

Conflict Resolution at the Monterey Bay Charter School

Key Words: conflict resolution; children; Global Majority; bullying; teasing

Abstract: While interning at the Monterey Bay Charter School, it came to my attention that there was a need for conflict resolution skills to be taught to the students. I wrote a grant to try to get the funds to bring Global Majority in to do a training session with the students and faculty.

The Monterey Bay Charter School is a public non-profit agency that serves the Monterey Peninsula. The children in attendance are in kindergarten through grade eight. There are about 300 children and 25 staff and faculty at the school.

There are an increased number of incident reports involving bullying and teasing between the students. Between August and December 2008 there were 118 reports.

For my capstone project I wrote a grant to bring in funds to be able to bring in a locally based company, Global Majority, who specializes in teaching conflict resolution and negotiation skills. Because of time constraints I was not able to get the company to come to the school this year. If the charter school does get the grant, then Global Majority will set up trainings for the school next year.

In order to get the project approved, I had to present to the Board of Directors and get their approval, and I have been in contact with other schools in the area that have also had the similar trainings from this company. My findings were that they were successful in reducing the incidents at the other schools.

In 1998 parents and teachers, inspired by the Waldorf model of education, founded the Monterey Bay Charter School. The school, a title program of the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District Charter School, opened its doors in a small church in Marina with 78 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade. As the school grew, larger facilities were needed. The school moved in 2001 to a former public school campus in the seaside town of Pacific Grove. They are currently enjoying their 5th year on this campus with a large, grassy playground spilling into the coastal live oaks and Monterey pines of Pebble Beach. The school now enrolls over 200 students in

Kindergarten through 8th grade classes and 30 students in the home school program. So far, the school has graduated five classes of eighth graders. The alumni of the class of 2001 are the first high school graduates. They are proud that the rigorous and creative approach to academics in the upper grades has helped the students to continue to be successful once they leave the school. Most of the graduates have become honors students in their high schools and a large percentage have been accepted into some of the area's exclusive private high schools.

Mission: The Monterey Bay Charter School MBCS is a partnership of diverse and committed families and faculty providing a Waldorf-inspired K-8 public education, which empowers children to discover their gifts, enjoy a full and enduring childhood, and to pursue lifelong learning.

The vision of Monterey Bay Charter School is to be a place that strategically, effectively, and in partnership with the community, provides a fully-integrated, Waldorf-inspired public charter school education that reflects our core values and the diversity of the community.

The organizational structure of the agency starts at the top with the Board of Directors, then underneath is the Faculty Council, The Hiring committee, the Finance committee, the Director's Administrative team, and a Parent Group (similar to PTA), then underneath them is the clerical staff, the teachers and the remedial staff. This structure serves to incorporate a collaborative effort to make the agency the best it can be and to keep it running as smoothly as possible. The entire second tier of the

organizational structure works together with the board of directors to approve proposals and etcetera.

After imputing incident reports into a spreadsheet it has come to the attention of myself and the Faculty Chair that there is an increased number of incident reports involving bullying and teasing between the children.

Dealing with bullies is a part of growing up. It cannot be eliminated. "Bullying behavior is prevalent throughout the world and it cuts across socio-economic, racial/ethnic and cultural lines. Researchers estimate that 20 to 30 percent of school-age children are involved in bullying incidents, as either perpetrators or victims" (Townsend-Butterworth). The effects of bullying and teasing can be very detrimental to children. They can cause emotional and psychological problems such as low self esteem, and depression just to name a few. "Research by the Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education involving 37 school shootings, including Columbine, finds that about two-thirds of student shooters felt bullied, harassed, threatened or injured by others...bullying is a serious and more common problem than previously recognized that can leave emotional wounds long after the physical wounds have healed" (American Psychological Association, October 29, 2004). Bullying and teasing affects how children learn as well. It can make it hard for children to concentrate in class and thereby inhibiting their ability to learn. Their grades will then drop causing more problems for the children.

Bullying and teasing causes a toxic environment for children to grow up in. How are children supposed to feel safe enough to open their minds to learn and grow if they are bullied and afraid to attend school? Children need to grow and learn valuable life

skills in school. Dealing with bullies is one of those valuable skills. We as adults and educators can make that part just a little easier on them by helping them deal with bullies in a non-violent and safe way.

After doing a spreadsheet of all the incident reports for the previous semester, there were a total of 118 reports involving some form of bullying or teasing. If the student body consists of about 300 students, having more than a third had reports involving bullying or teasing, that is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Once this was discovered the faculty chair and I came up with a plan to bring in outside help.

As mentioned above the Monterey Bay Charter school serves all populations in the Monterey Peninsula area. Most of the children that are enrolled in the school come from families that are broken, from a military background, or children that are autistic and have many different disabilities. They have children from many different backgrounds and cultures, age ranges from about 4 to 14. Children are very impressionable and are at an age where they are learning valuable life skills. Children are dealing with more and more problems at a younger age and do not need the added trauma of being bullied and teased.

After reviewing the literature that I have researched I have found many interesting and disturbing facts about bullying and teasing and the consequences of them. A few very disturbing facts to me are that a child is bullied on average, every 7 minutes and that each bullying episode lasts about 37 seconds. 60 percent of kids, who are identified as bullies by the time they are eight years old, will have a criminal

conviction by the age of 24. And 43% of school children are afraid to use the bathroom at school because of teasing and bullying (Viadero, n.d.). I never truly realized how much bullying and teasing can impact children. It has gotten progressively worse. Children are a lot meaner today than when I was a child. There are many programs available that are successful. It is just a matter of finding the right one that works with your school, community or even with an individual child.

I chose Global Majority after I researched and communicated with them. They have been very successful in other schools in the area and globally. They have techniques that I think will work the best with the school and their mission and vision statements.

For my capstone project I have written a grant that has been sent out to three different foundations in order to receive funding to bring a company, Global Majority, who specializes in conflict resolution skills training for the school and the surrounding community. Global Majority has traveled around the world and hosted numerous trainings around the world that have all been successful.

My first step in this project was to create a spreadsheet to input all the incident reports into for the previous semester. After seeing the alarmingly high number of incidents involving bullying and teasing with the children, I spoke with my mentor and we decided that I should write a grant to bring in funding to do a conflict resolution skills training for the school. She brought Global Majority to my attention and since then I have been working with them on organizing training for the school. In the process of

collaborating with Global Majority, I simultaneously had to write a proposal for the Board of Directors of the School and do a presentation. The Board gave me approval to continue with my project. I then created another spreadsheet that the school will use as an evaluation tool to determine if the training is successful. If the number of incident reports decreases, even by a mere 20%, the training will be a success. If the training is a success then the Monterey Bay Charter School will be a safer and friendlier environment for everyone.

My project address three Major Learning Outcomes, the first being Collaboration because I collaborated with Global majority and staff at the Monterey Bay Charter School. The second, Leadership, because I was the one writing the grants and organizing the training; and lastly, Professional Communication because I had to communicate professionally with everyone I came into contact with, either via telephone, email, or talking to someone face to face.

The CSUMB Vision Statement states, The University will work to “....seek ways to contribute to the economy of the state, the wellbeing of our communities, and the quality of life and development of its students, faculty, and service areas.” My project deals with creating a better quality of life for the students, staff, faculty and the community surrounding the Monterey Bay Charter School.

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Additional Documents:

Evaluation tool

Grant

May 6, 2009

Payless ShoeSource Foundation Grants
3231 5G 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS 6607

Re: Conflict Resolution at the Monterey Bay Charter School

To Whom It May Concern,

The Monterey Bay Charter School is very happy to present this proposal for your review. We are excited to have the chance to work with you on bringing a peaceful and safe environment to the Monterey Bay Charter School. The Monterey Bay Charter School, like most schools, is experiencing conflict between their students. Over 50% of the population of the school is being bullied or teased. We are working towards bringing in a member of a group titled Global Majority to train our teachers and staff in ways that will help the children deal with conflict in healthy and non-violent ways.

We have been working with a group of students on ways that they can handle conflict on their own, and we have seen a reduction in the number of incidents involving conflict.

With the success of the reduction of incidents with the students, the Monterey Bay Charter School would like to introduce the entire student body, faculty, staff, and the parents to a conflict resolution training program; in hope of having the same if not greater success with the training. Our proposal requests \$1,100 in funding for the training fees.

We greatly appreciate the Payless ShoeSource Foundation taking the time to review our proposal. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 831-655-4638.

Thank you,

Sharon Levitt
Intern
Monterey Bay Charter School
1004-B David Ave
Pacific Grove Ca 93950

Incident Reports from *date* to *date*

Name of student Grade # reports giver Teacher(s) Reason for report

Total number

Current members of the Board

Officers

- Jennifer Golden, L.C.S.W., M.S.W., Board Chair
- William Leahy, Vice Chair
- Suzanne Rosen, M.D., Secretary

Directors

- Cassandra Gallup-Bridge, M.A., ex-officio Director
- JoAnne Holbrook, M.A., Director
- Vicki Lohman, M.A., Director
- Megan Havens, ex-officio Director
- Laura Stephens Robel, ex-officio Director
- AnnMarie Shenefield, Director

Note: "ex-officio" indicates a non-voting member

Current Staff

- Cassandra Gallup-Bridge, Director
- Mia Michael, Kindergarten Teacher
- Jo Ann Holbrook, Morning Glory Kindergarten
- Giuliette Garland First Grade Class Teacher
- Maria Case Second Grade Class Teacher
- Victoria Lohman, Third Grade Class Teacher
- Howard Schrager, Fourth Grade Class Teacher
- Peter Mentor, Fifth Grade Class Teacher
- Krista Clarke, Sixth Grade Class Teacher
- Kara Gober Seventh Grade Class Teacher
- Ted Maehr, Eighth Grade Class Teacher
- Renee Shinkle, Resource Specialist
- Lili Blalock, Handwork Specialty Teacher
- Meg Boller, Speech Therapy
- Patty Boyle, Reading Specialist
- Vanisha Evans, String Instruments Music Teacher (4-5)
- Rosanna Gianini, Spanish
- Peg Rudy, Math Support
- Cathryn True Varlet, Choral Music
- Kristi Heath, Office Manager
- Julie DiGiralomo, Office Assistant
- Amy Neal, Business Manager
- Megan Havens, Faculty Chair

Narrative

Background

The Monterey Bay Charter School is a public tuition-free charter school offering Waldorf methods education for children in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade.

In 1998 parents and teachers, inspired by the Waldorf model of education, founded the Monterey Bay Charter School. The school, a title program of the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District Charter School, opened its doors in a small church in Marina with 78 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade.

The school moved in 2001 to a former public school campus in the seaside town of Pacific Grove. We are currently enjoying our 5th year on this campus with a large, grassy playground spilling into the coastal live oaks and Monterey pines of Pebble Beach. The school now enrolls over 200 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade classes and 30 students in our home school program. So far, the school has graduated five classes of eighth graders. The alumni of the class of 2001 are our first high school graduates. College acceptances for this group included: Cal State SF, Chico State, UC Irvine, Whitman College, and Pratt University. We are proud that the rigorous and creative approach to academics in the upper grades has helped our students to continue to be successful once they leave our school. Most of our graduates have become honors students in their high schools and a large percentage have been accepted into some of the area's exclusive private high schools.

Currently we have various specialty classes that the entire school participates in such as, music, handwork, Spanish, games and technology. There are currently 212 students from across the Monterey Peninsula ranging in grades from kindergarten to eighth and from different backgrounds and cultures. We have students from all aspects of life, from the children with special needs to the gifted. The Monterey Bay Charter School is a partnership of diverse and committed families and faculty providing a Waldorf-inspired K-8 public education, which empowers children to discover their gifts, enjoy a full and enduring childhood, and to pursue lifelong learning. We want the Monterey Bay Charter School to be a place that strategically, effectively, and in partnership with the community, provides a fully-integrated, Waldorf-inspired public charter school education that reflects our core values and the diversity of the community.

Statement of need

Over the last few years the school has noticed an increase in the number of incident reports involving conflict among the students. Many of these conflicts center on a child or children being the victim(s) of bullying and teasing. Many children who are bullied or teased can develop serious psychological issues such as depression and low self-esteem which can lead to other problems as well, such as incidents like the Columbine shooting

and, in extreme cases, suicide. At one point in time in our lives everyone has experienced a form of bullying or teasing and knows the detrimental effects it can have on someone. Children in today's society are still dealing with many of the same problems we were faced with, only now they can escalate into something much worse than simple name calling.

There are many programs out to help reduce or resolve these issues. It is just a matter of finding what will work better with the students at this school. We currently do not have such a program at the school. That is why we are proposing to bring in a member of an organization specializing in conflict resolution training. With this training, teachers, staff, children, and the parents/community members can learn skills on how to handle situations involving conflict in healthy non-violent ways. With these new skills the school will become a safer place where students can come and feel free to express themselves with out fear of being ridiculed or teased by others; a place where children can truly thrive and be able to have fun.

If we are able to receive the funds for the conflict resolution training, we hope to reduce or eliminate the number of incident reports involving conflict between the students, to provide a safe environment for the children and to teach them effective problem solving skills that they will be able to use later in life to solve conflicts in non-violent ways.

Time line

1st month: evaluate and count number of incident reports

2nd month: Training sessions with staff, faculty, students, and parents/community members.

3rd and 4th month: observe students after training and notice reactions when handling conflicts

5th and 6th month: gather and analyze incident reports to determine how effective the program will be and to determine if training will be repeated yearly with new students.

If the number of incident reports involving conflict between students decreased by even 30 percent than we know that the program was a success.

Budget**Total amount requested \$1,100**

The training fee for Global Majority contains 2 four hour long sessions and follow up sessions.