

Adult Hero in Our Community

Mrs. Solange Metz, my ballet teacher, is the most wonderful person I've ever known. She is so responsible, caring and fair. I've known her since I was three years old. Why is she the best hero in our community you ask? Your answer that question after you read about her.

She has caring written all over her. My class did so well on our dance that she bought us beautiful flower shaped jeweled rings. There was this other time where she bought lollipops, and colorful erasers. She doesn't only give students presents because she cares about them; she also is kind in class. She tells funny things in class such as: her daughter having a goal to be able to one split with one leg and not the other. You see why she is caring now let's read how she's fair.

Fairness is her middle name. She shows this trait in many ways. One example is that she has two lines that take turns to be in the front. Another example is that she gives enough time to work out on our recital dances, and any other. She spends the same amount of time with everyone, and she gives everyone the heads up when we're going to show a move to our parents, so we can practice it. Let's see how this hero is responsible.

Responsibility is given when you see this lady, remembering all her 13 classes' dances! I'm reminded that my mom is on the other side of the room when it's time to go home. She takes attendance so she knows if we're there or not.

Now you can answer the question why she is the best candidate for the Gaithersburg Adult Hero. The answer is because she's very fair, caring, and responsible hero.

Carrie Pett – Grade 5
Thurgood Marshall Elementary School
Principal – Pamela Nazzaro
Teacher – Sherry DeLauder

Nothing can bring you down with your consent!

“It’s not the load that breaks you down; it’s the way you carry it.” These are wise words by Lena Horne, but what did she mean by this? “The load” is a metaphorical representation of an emotional, mental, or physical burden that one carries. She states that a person facilitates his/her own downfall; the “load” does not. By this she means that one must go about their life with grace, performing one’s duties joyfully and keeping one’s mindset positive. When a person begins to live out of obligation and regret, they are burdened with a heavy “load” that may in turn “break... (him/her)...down.”

For example, the responsibility of a woman and her family is taking in her elderly mother can either be a blessing or a burden. The woman knows that she must care extensively for her mother, but can just as easily put her in the care of an assisted living home. While choosing the first choice, she can either gladly care for her aging mother, or care for her out of obligation. If she does not welcome the new responsibility with joy, the woman may lead her life regretting her once kind deed.

Personally, I have a very hectic schedule. I must juggle multiple things on a daily basis including school, college classes, internship, work, spending time with my family and friends, etc. All these responsibilities may at times prove to be too much, but I have learned to handle them in stride. My responsibilities symbolize my “load,” and the moment I start viewing them as a burden, they will take hold of my life and may easily break me down. However, with Lena Horne’s advice, I shall not let myself facilitate my own demise.

Whether you are a child or an adult, everyone has responsibilities and executing them is entirely up to you. Letting life become a burden often negatively results in one’s unhappiness. Horne theorized that one’s responsibilities do not make a burden, but how one takes them is where the burden is made.

Cynthia Njuguna -Grade 12
Northwest High School
Principal – E. Lancellotti Dempsey
Teacher – Cynthia Gill

Adult Hero in Our Community

My hero is my mom. She is really wonderful. My mom is nice and kind. Also my mom is Christian. She believes in God. My mom is responsible, caring, and trustworthy to me.

My mom is responsible because she always signs all important papers from school. Also she checks my homework to see if I have done it all. She always checks to see if I am ready and appropriate for school. That's why I think my mom is responsible.

My mom is trustworthy because I can trust her. She never lies to me. She always tells me the truth. I can tell her secrets and she'll promise not to tell. That's why my mom is trustworthy.

I also think my mom is caring because she helps me choose my clothes and helps me buy some clothes too. She also takes me to the doctor and the dentist when I don't feel good. That's why I think my mom is caring.

This is why my mom is my hero. I think my mom is a good role model. She shows great pillars of character. I also think my mom is a great mom because she teaches me from her mistakes. She also acts like a grown up because she makes good choices. She is special because she brought me into this world. My mom works really hard and that's what role models do! That's why my mom is my hero.

Gisselle Romero- Grade 5
Washington Grove Elementary School
Principal – Susan Barranger
Teacher – Cathy Haddad

Hero Essay

My adult hero is Jane Sabijon. She is my mother. She is only a mother of one child, which is me. She is my hero because she is the most responsible person I have ever seen in my life.

The two character pillars my mom demonstrated are she is very responsible and caring. An example why she is responsible would be, everyday she would wake up at 5:00 a.m. and go to work in Washington, D.C. Her job is to take care of babies and old people. (Which is like a caregiver.)

After she goes home from work she is very tired and exhausted! But she still cooks for me that takes hours! She also cleans the house and would do everything to make me healthy and safe.

Last but not the least, sometimes my mom gets very sick, but she still goes to work to save money for my college. Now that's very responsible! She always tells me that if I finish college, she will be very happy! That's why I will always try my best to reach that goal by studying, getting good grades, and being honorable, so that I can give her something back for all the hard work she did. An example why she is caring would be after school, she would call me and check if I'm alright. She buys me vitamins, fruits and vegetables. And every time I get sick, she would stay up all night to take good care of me. She gives me medicines and she will try her best to make me feel better. Now that's very caring!

My mom has changes my life in a positive way. By telling me to never break any kind of laws or rules. And always obey it. Now I know what to do and not to do.

My mom is very special to me because she gave me love and care. No one has ever done that to me before. And that will always be in my heart forever. My mom can be the best mom in the world!

My mom has taught me two very important things. She taught me responsibility and respect. I learned to always respect other people and never yell at them especially to the adults. And I also learned to never make fun of other people's culture and always respect them. Last but not the least, I learned always to do my homework on time, study, do what I am supposed to do at school, and never get lazy when it comes to chores. And that's what I learned from my amazing mom.

I think my mom is a great role model because she is a leader; she is nice, caring, respectful, and responsible. I always make mistakes but my mom always forgives me. She always says, "everyone makes mistakes dear. " And it just makes me awesome!

If I was famous, I would everyone how wonderful my mom is. She will always be my hero and always will be in my heart.

I love you mom!

Heaven Jane Sabijon – Grade 5
Washington Grove Elementary School
Principal: Susan Barranger
Teacher – Soojin Lee

Making a Difference

Everyone in the world is different, everyone has a set purpose in life and although no one is sure what that purpose is, people live their life doing what they believe is right. What truly separates others from the rest is their character, the certain traits and qualities about someone that makes them genuine. But what traits make someone a role model, someone who can make a difference in someone's life one way or another? There are six important "pillars of character" that can help make someone the best person they can be; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. By keeping those aspects of character in mind when making decisions, it can make a huge difference in not only yours but other's life as well. If you are ever in question of our character or actions think of a quote said by Mohandas Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." One short quote with ten simple words, but has the most meaningful interpretation.

Acquiring all six pillars of character may seem like a hard task when you try and execute each one separately; however, by simply living life by the quote of Gandhi all those traits will come naturally to you. Nowadays, it seems that the only stories we hear on the news are negative ones; it has become rare to hear a completely positive story on my type of news source. In one way or another, there is one pillar out of the six missing in those stories. From this, according to Gandhi, we can make a difference by simply obeying the laws, sharing, keeping an open mind, being honest, staying polite, and having self-restraint. If you honestly think about it, if you want to see change in the world, there will be no effort or change made if someone does not take that first step. Being able to take the first step and showing people how much of a difference it can make, shows your true character and follows the six pillars.

In order to make a difference in someone's life and be a role model for others, it is important to show examples of the six pillars of character in your actions. Being trustworthy means always being honest, showing integrity, being dependable, and reliable in all aspects of life not only with the different relationships you hold with people. Showing respect means being polite, and showing tolerance to everyone in the world no matter their race, sex or background. Being responsible means showing self-restraint, and taking hold of the duties that you feel necessary even if you are not directly asked to do so. Showing citizenship means to obey the laws, and taking the responsibility for the duties as part of your community. Being fair means having an open mind, and not having a bias conscience when making a decision. Showing you care means sharing, and showing compassion towards others. By living your life based on the quote by Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," you can follow the six pillars of character.

Kassandra Phan – Grade 12
Northwest High School
Principal - E. Lancellotti Dempsey
Teacher – Cynthia Gill

The Birth of Prejudice

William Hazlitt said, "Prejudice is the child of ignorance." To be prejudiced is to judge an individual without having true or concrete knowledge of that person; a belief that is formed without understanding. The act of prejudice is rooted in ignorance and can lead to discrimination. Ignorance is in fact a lack of understanding. When people do not understand, or don't care to understand they tend to cut off the object of which they misinterpret. The IRS's motto is "Ignorance is no excuse." In this case, ignorance is no excuse to reject broadening horizons nor is it an excuse for refusal to learn something new and see issues in a different light. Therefore this passage of wisdom will remind me to always look at each side of a situation and to stray away from forming an opinion before complete knowledge is gained. I will continue to progress toward enlightenment in order to maintain a safe distance from ignorance.

One of the six pillars of character is citizenship. The additional pillars respect, responsibility, fairness, and trustworthiness all tie into this. A true and upstanding citizen shows respect through the knowledge and competence of others. It is each citizen's responsibility to have the decency and respect enough to judge a person after full understanding and analysis. An unjust predetermination of another citizen rules out the opportunity for fairness. Complete fairness only comes from awareness or lack of ignorance, which cannot be accomplished by creating prejudices. In the end, if a person can decisively accomplish these aspects of character, trustworthiness is then attained. A individual who encompasses these 6 pillars of Character definitely envisions William Hazlitt's article of wisdom that, "Prejudice is the child of wisdom."

No one is born prejudiced; it is not an incurable disease. With awareness, education and action, we can make a real change in the world... one person at a time.

Kaylah Woodard – Grade 12
Northwest High School
Principal - E. Lancellotti Dempsey
Teacher - Cynthia Gill

“ADULT HERO IN OUR COMMUNITY” CONTEST
My Dad, My Hero

My name is Kevin Lee Merrell and my hero is my dad. He was pretty much all the pillars. He was really a good man. I realized the importance of what he did and how caring he was after he died. The way he showed the six pillars was barely noticeable. My dad was a very kind man who loved to help others, when he would be coming home and see people walking with many grocery bags. He will offer them a ride and take them home. This is how he would show caring and kindness in a way that was so unnoticeable. Many people are not as kind to open the door to their car to bring people back to their homes but my dad was. My dad also showed caring and kindness by donating to charity such as SOME (So Others May Eat). My dad did not only donate money but also volunteered his time at Gaithersburg Elementary School (GES). He was the Vice President of the PTA/GES and would often volunteer for school activities such as chaperone for field trips- this is how he would show trustworthiness, responsibility and citizenship. My dad understood the difficulty and grief of others and when he could help he did. This is one of the main reasons my dad was so kind and made him who he was.

Kevin Merrell – Grade 5
Gaithersburg Elementary School
Principal: Niki Hazel
Teacher – Tom Gray

My Journey

In life there are always a series of rules to follow. These rules are known as the six pillars of character; ethical values to guide our choices. A famous Chinese philosopher once said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," Lao Tzu. I was age 12 when my parents separated and my mother brought me and my younger brother to the United States from Zimbabwe. Before I arrived I could neither speak nor understand a lot of English. I had never been exposed to the races besides my own and so, I was very fearful of the language barrier and of the possibility that I would not be able to make friends.

One of the six pillars of character is responsibility; do what you are supposed to do, persevere: keep on trying! When I was enrolled into my new school all of my fears became a reality, having previously received high grades in Zimbabwe I was falling behind with my studies in America. I was placed in English for Speakers of Other Languages class (E.S.O.L.). To overcome this challenge I spent my time in the library reading story books and stayed after school to receive help from teachers. All of my hard work eventually paid off when finally, during the middle of the third semester of my seventh grade year my grades improved tremendously. I received As in my reading classes. I was also awarded the Africa American Exceptional Student Award in my 7th and 8th grade years, but best of all I was removed from my E.S.O.L. class and placed in a Spanish class.

Citizenship is defined as doing your share to make your school or community better; this includes getting involved and being a good neighbor. After overcoming my own problems with comprehension and language, I wanted to help other children who had the same problem; I decided to stay after school with my reading teacher to help tutor others. I received thirty hours of community service by my middle school graduation. This community service experience was an eye opener for me because it showed me that not only can I accomplish anything by setting my mind to it, but I can also help other people do the same thing.

There are many steps that I am taking today for a brighter future tomorrow. Today as a 12th grade student, I speak English fluently and have been studying the Spanish language for five years, which I consider to be one of my greatest accomplishments yet. I am also an honors student taking Advanced Placement English course, which will hopefully help me attain college credit before I graduate from high school. In college I would like to pursue a career in the health field because I am compassionate and caring. I saw a lot of suffering in Africa before I came to the USA and would like to make a difference by working closely with those who are ill. I have taken various advanced science courses including Chemistry, Physics and Biology as preparations for a future career in the medical field. I am also an intern at the Cultura Medical and Cosmetic Spa with world renowned Dr. Eliot Battle in Washington, D.C. The classes I am taking today and all the effort I am putting forth will eventually pay off later on.

In order to be a well rounded student one has to be trustworthy. Trustworthiness is the ability to build a good reputation while having the courage to do the right thing. Besides being active in academics, my involvement in athletics and after school programs is very important to me. Some after school activities I am involved in is the Ambassadors Program, a student organization in which students come together for the betterment of the community; we provide food and gifts for underprivileged families and raise food for shelters. In my opinion one of our best charity activities was our primary election day bake sale; each of the ambassadors made a treat for the busy voters of the evening, and the profits went to The Germantown Help; an organization that helps provide food for homeless. Other than Ambassadors I am also an active participant in our schools instructional golf team, Mock Trial team and I am the advisory representative for my class. This leadership position taught me to be respectful and fair toward other people's opinions. All of these activities have helped improve my time management and social skills in preparation for the future.

Throughout my childhood years I have worked very hard. Using the 6 Pillars to guide me along the way I plan to incorporate wisdom into my life strategy. I have gone through many struggles in my life, but have not allowed any of them to stop me from achieving my goals. Keeping my priorities straight, I strive to be the best at whatever I do in life, not letting anything get in the way. After my college graduation I do not want just a regular job, I want a career. I want to be successful at whatever I do because I know that in the end hard work pays off.

Mathilda Chanakira – Grade 12
Northwest High School
Principal – E. Lancellotti Dempsey
Teacher – Cynthia Gill

Courage vs. Cowardice

To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice. The opposite of this cowardice, to do what is right, is in other words known as courage. To have the courage to take action against something that is wrong takes strength, especially when alone in doing the right thing.

Rosa Parks, one of the most famous women in American history, is considered to have done countless courageous acts according to this motto. She defied society's standards of the time when she decided to do what was right. Refusing to give up her seat on a bus took strength. Knowing the right thing to do, Parks not only refused her seat, but she also refused to be a coward. Not only did she do the right thing, but she inspired others. She gave others the courage to do the right thing.

What if she had decided to give up her seat? What if she had continued to go along with society and the standards of the time? In other words, if she had known what was right and not done it, as many others did, she may not have changed America. Not only does not taking action result in cowardice, but it does not make a difference.

To stand up for what is right is not easy or simple. In fact, it is probably one of the most difficult things to do. Incorporating this wisdom into a life philosophy, however, leads to development of the 6 Pillars of Character. Having the courage to do what is right brings about respect in oneself. The other 5 Pillars of Character come about with actually doing the right thing. Responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring and trustworthiness come about when one does the right thing that many are afraid to do. By living by this life motto cannot only bring out strength in oneself, but also give others courage to do the right thing.

Pooja Patel - Grade 12
Northwest High School
Principal—E. Lancellotti Dempsey
Teacher – Cynthia Gill

My Hero Essay

The hero I have picked is my fourth grade teacher, Ms. Knight. She shows all six pillars of character, trust, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring. She uses the traits to be the best teacher she can be. She gives an impact to each different student.

Trust is a trait Ms. Knight shows. When she says something, she always keeps her word to everyone. For example, if she says she'll give the class a pizza party, then she would order pizza.

Ms. Knight is a person who always shows respect. For example, once I was reading my Native American report, she made sure the other students weren't talking and she wasn't talking either.

She's responsible because she makes sure each student understands what she's teaching. If they don't understand, she'd help them out until they understand the whole lesson. When Jeffrey Gomez didn't understand, she would always help him.

She's always been fair to everyone. If she gives ice cream to a student, she gives it to everyone else in the class. She also gives it to teachers. But sometimes she can't because sometimes it's a game.

She shows citizenship by recycling and picking up trash. When she sees trash on the floor, she picks it up and recycles or trashes it. She always shows citizenship everywhere she goes.

Ms. Knight can be anybody's hero. She has all the character traits. That's why I picked Ms. Knight as my hero for this special essay.

Sharon Hui – Grade 5
Gaithersburg Elementary School
Principal – Niki Hazel
Teacher – Tom Gray