

**Shahid Muhammad**, Principal, Forest Oak Middle School  
Former Employee of the City of Gaithersburg Olde Towne Youth Center

I was first introduced to the CHARACTER COUNTS! program as an assistant principal at Fields Road Elementary School in 2002.

Respect, Responsibility and Trustworthiness are the backbone of much of the teaching we provide to adolescents today. Responsible citizens make healthy and responsible choices!

Ethics education grows leadership plain and simple. If we are creating a generation of leaders, we safely put our communities and country on a solid foundation for success.

[The concepts of CHARACTER COUNTS! are] embedded as a secondary curriculum in the instruction of students access on a daily basis. Positive affirmation and modeling of CHARACTER COUNTS! should be a repetitive action on a daily basis.

[Local government involvement in character development] demonstrates what we deem important in the development of children and young adults. It sends a clear message that we believe in the youth and this is what we expect from them.

I'd like to thank the City of Gaithersburg for its role in my personal and professional life.