

February 15, 2017

Last week you received a letter from Cambridge Public Schools, translated into 6 languages, reaffirming our support for all our students and providing resources for immigrant families. Please know that Graham and Parks welcomes and values all families; our diversity makes us stronger. Please let us know if you need help or support with any immigration related issues. We will do our best to connect you with agencies in the community that can help.

و صلتكم رسالة من مدارس Cambridge Public Schools مترجمة الى ٦ لغات تاكد دعمنا لكل التلاميذ و توفير موارد للمعلومات الخاصة بالمهاجرين • نريدكم ان تعلموا ان مدرسة اطفالكم Graham and Parks ترحب بجميع العائلات وتتمن بان قوتنا في اختلافنا • المرجو اعلامنا ادا كنتم في حاجة الى مساعدة متعلقة بكم او بموضوع الهجرة ككل • سوف نعمل جاهدين على ربطكم بالمصالح المختصة لمساعدتكم •

Dear Families,

Parents and teachers are storytellers. We have to be. Children look to us for narratives that make sense of a complex and chaotic world. Because they're children, we often tell them simple and often hopeful stories, about life and death, right and wrong, and human progress. As children get older we complicate these stories, make exceptions, and sometimes even leave questions unresolved, but the general thrust is upwards, towards an optimistic worldview where things generally get better, if slowly. If the stories we tell children, inside and outside of school, have a single theme, it's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous line, borrowed from Theodore Parker, that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." It's a comforting outline of history, which suggests that time is all that's needed for things to come out right in the end.

But of course Dr. King didn't believe that time alone moves the dial towards justice. He often referred to the arc of the moral universe, but where it appears in its most famous iteration, the quote sits amongst others, from William Cullen Bryant and the New Testament. From Bryant, King quotes a line of poetry from "The Battle-Field," "Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again," and from the New Testament, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The first quote is grounded in faith; the second is grounded in action. Taken together, they suggest that progress is a matter of faith and action: that we must at once have faith that beyond the horizon the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice, but also take action to ensure that it does. This is not a simple story, but it's one we must tell children, especially when they hear messages of exclusion and prejudice that undermine their sense of community and self worth.

At Graham and Parks, we have a history of telling stories about our country that acknowledge the long and often dispiriting road towards progress and our collective responsibility to walk it. We want our students to leave our school with the long

view of social progress and to be empowered to make a difference. Part of this work is our curriculum, the stories we tell, but equally important is creating an inclusive and welcoming community where our differences are a manifestation of strength and not a source of fear and exclusion. In other words, modeling for students the kind of world we hope they will one day inhabit, somewhere along the arc of the moral universe. This means welcoming children to school in the morning with singing and greetings in many languages, as our teachers did on January 30th (see page 3) and celebrating change-makers from around the world, as we did at our all-school assembly on Tuesday. But it also means modeling justice in our day-to-day actions and in how we treat others, and this comes down to love.

Five days into the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave an address at the Holt Street Baptist Church with the aim of encouraging the community to be “courageous and prepared for positive action.” In the address, which is deeply grounded in his faith, Dr. King says of justice that it “is really love in calculation. Justice is love correcting that which revolts against love.” And so, if there is one story we tell children, let it be that the justice is only just if it’s animated by love for all people, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Best,

Tony