

Carl Sagan

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More often than not, the weather over the April vacation is miserable. Luckily, we had fantastic weather all break. While the Hardimon clan did not travel much beyond the far shores of Framingham, we still had a good time. The kids enjoyed a series of sleepovers and played a lot of soccer and softball, while Michaela and I worked in the yard and found some time to relax. Now it is time to take all this renewed energy and blast through the remaining 8 weeks of school.

Over the past week, I have spent a lot of time talking with friends and colleagues about the student request to participate in the National Day of Silence. As I previously stated, I received a wonderful letter written by a JRG student requesting permission to participate in the Day of Silence a few days before the event. After granting permission for this student initiated activity, I informed parents through the last issue of *Grey Matters*. The staff and I put a few structures into place to assure that there would be no disruption to the school day and so that teachers and students would know the expectations for the day.

While the majority of parental feedback we received was quite positive, a few parents expressed concerns. Some of these parents mistakenly thought that the Day of Silence was a school sponsored event instead of an independent student activity. Others felt that although this was a student initiated activity, such an event had no place in a school as it promoted a social/political agenda. After a week and a half of reflection, I am comfortable with the way the school handled the student request. I support any initiative that shines a light on the destructive nature of discrimination. One of our jobs as educators is to encourage active citizenship and I would be hard pressed to deny a student's request whose goal was to make RJG a safer school for everyone. With that said, one place I feel we, as a school, could have done a better job was through communication. If I could go back in time through my "way-back machine", I would have sent a letter home on Tuesday telling parents about the day and encouraging them to engage in a meaningful dialog with their child regarding their child's possible participation.

The day itself went without a hitch. We had about 150 students who participated and teachers reported that there were no problems in the classrooms. While some participating students found it difficult to remain silent all day, especially in the café, I believe the vast majority of the students who chose to take part in this event walked away with many new insights into the lives of others.

On another note, as happens every year, there are the occasional incidents of theft from our locker rooms. In an effort to thwart these problems, the PE teachers lock the doors of the locker rooms after the students change and do not re-open them until the end of class. Since the problems that have occurred happened when students were still changing, the PE teachers regularly remind students not to bring valuables to PE. If, however, students do bring valuables, they are asked to leave them with either Ms. McClure or Mr. Maver, who can lock them in their offices. While we will continue to try to prevent these occurrences from happening, we need your help. Parents, if your child must bring valuable items to schools, please make it clear that these items should be locked in their lockers or secured with the PE teachers. Prevention is the best solution.