



The Lore School UNITY Program History of an “Award-Winning” Program

The Unity Program is a character education program which focuses upon the development of social skills, creating a caring environment and building student relationships. Over the years this program has been refined and expanded since its inception in 1993. The concepts and goals of the Unity program were first derived from the principles of the Multicultural Museum. The Lore School faculty and staff were committed to promoting an atmosphere where cooperative and collaborative efforts can bring about a genuine understanding and respect for all. With these principles in mind, the administration, teachers and staff wanted to create a functional, caring and responsive learning community in which students could grow with the capacity to learn and to care for themselves and others. This is how Unity was born.



During the first year of the Unity Program, many unique, memorable and beneficial programs and activities were created to promote positive social skills and citizenship.

Twenty-two specific words were selected by the fifth grade students that focused on the qualities needed to live a life that would reflect unity (appreciate, accept, unite, respect, care, include, love, hope, thank, forgive, think, share, support, improve, give, be fair, discuss, consider, help, be kind, celebrate, listen). Banners, inscribed with the logo of the school mascot and one of the Unity words were displayed in the main corridor of the school building. The success of these initial programs and activities encouraged the staff to broaden the scope and to create a more encompassing school-wide Unity Program for the future. In the year 2000, four new unity words were added (cooperate, be responsible, be truthful and trust).

In 2008 Lore School was recognized as a New Jersey School of Character. After winning this prestigious award, our school was named as one of twenty-five national finalists which will be vying for the ten National Schools of Character Award.

Lore School and its programs have received numerous awards from the New Jersey State Department of Education. This school has been the recipient of a Star School Award and two Best Practice Awards. In 1995-96, the Multicultural Museum was chosen for a Best Practice Award in the category of bilingual/multicultural education. Lore’s Unity Program was recognized with a Best Practice Award in 1996-97 for its excellence in the category of citizenship/character education. In 1997, the Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues recognized Lore School for its commitment to the themes of PRIDE (Peace, Respect, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity) in its UNITY Program. Lore School received national recognition in the spring of 2000 when it was recognized





as one of twenty-one semi-finalists for The National Character Education Award presented by The Character Education Partnership in Washington. Also, in 2000 the Multicultural Museum was awarded a Promising Practice Citation by these prestigious organizations.

Over the years, a variety of activities and educationally sound programs have been added to the Lore School UNITY Program. One of the most rewarding for both staff and students has been the Giving Program. This program was designed to teach students the importance of giving back to the community. Service Learning is important aspect of this component of the UNITY Program. Since its inception, the Giving Program has raised funds to benefit needy children and their families. Some of these endeavors have included raising over \$1800 for the Sunshine Foundation “Dreamlift”, running food, clothing, blanket and coat drives, raising over \$3,000 to purchase holiday toys and gifts at Toys “R” Us for all the children in foster care with the NJ Foster Parents’ Association, donating to Meals on Wheels, and raising over \$5,000 to purchase an “ark” of animals for a needy village in a Third World country through the Heifer Foundation. Our annual spring Giving Project for Mobile Meals on Wheels provides food and treats baskets for over 150 homebound local residents. These components of the UNITY Program have been very successful by providing our students with an opportunity to live what they have learned. In addition, the Giving Program has received several awards and citations, such as the Levira Leftwich Award, the Meals on Wheels award, Heifer International award and others.

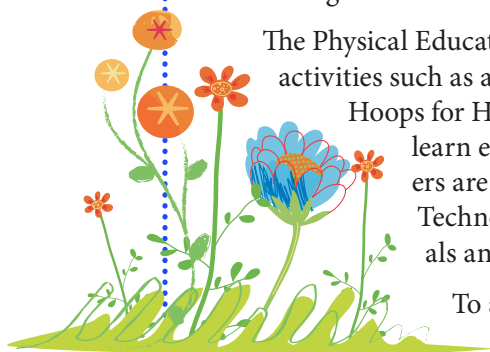
An important part of the UNITY Program is to recognize the importance of all ethnicities by demonstrating the ability to respect other cultures and appreciate the similarities and differences of all people. This is showcased in our annual “award-winning” Multicultural Museum which is held during the second week of March. This event has had over 2,000 people attend in two nights. This UNITY activity offers our culturally diverse student body an opportunity to share the aspects of their culture with the community. “An Evening of the Arts” showcases and stimulates an appreciation of the musical and artistic talents of our students. With concerts both instrumental and vocal, our students learn the themes of UNITY are woven into all aspects of the school and curriculum. Thus, teaching them that effort, hard work and achievement are interrelated.

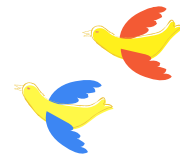


Another unique feature of the UNITY Program is Unity Family Groups. The UNITY Family Groups concept was adapted from a school in Pennsylvania. Family groups consist of groupings of students from Kindergarten to fifth grade. These groups meet on a regular basis to work on a number of selected activities. They were organized to strengthen the bonds of all of the Lore School students and to create a more, caring, peaceful and responsive school community. One of the most exciting meetings for Family Groups is UNITY Field Day which involves a variety of non-competitive athletic events designed by the Physical Education Department. These events involve mental and physical challenges where the older students assist the younger ones in a cooperative effort.

The Physical Education Department supports the Unity Program with a variety of activities such as a foul shooting contest, the fitness trail, Jump Rope for Heart, Hoops for Heart and the carnival. Even through physical education, students learn examples of giving and cooperation. All special subject teachers are important resources for various aspects of the UNITY Program. Technology and library resources assist in research and provide visuals and aesthetics for various components of the UNITY Program.

To add to the social skills curriculum, components of the “Responsive Classroom” management theories have also been





integrated into the UNITY Program. All classrooms in this school begin each day with a Morning Meeting which sets the “tone” of the day. This creates a sense of belonging, a place where children truly care about themselves and others. Also, the prestigious Northeast Conference for Responsive Classroom has been held at Lore School. Teachers and staff members from other schools in nearby states come here to be trained in the Responsive Classroom ideology.

The Lore Parent Association is an integral part of the UNITY Program. They support the school’s efforts as well as provide major expenditures throughout the year. They provide ongoing student enrichment as well as promote reading through book fairs and other incentives such as hiring authors and illustrators to come to the school for day long programs and workshops. The Lore Parent Association supports the UNITY Program in many ways such as donations, parent presentations, volunteers and enrichment.

Students who exemplify the meaning of the UNITY words are selected by their classroom teachers to receive a “link” during the linking ceremony. As part of the linking ceremony, these students ring the Lore School UNITY bell as they proclaim the school motto, “All for One and One for All”. As mementos of this honor, the students also receive a UNITY certificate, a UNITY pin and a small bell inscribed with the school motto. These mementos of the Linking Program are reminders for the students that they are “linked” to Lore School forever.

As a culminating activity to their elementary years, the fifth graders participate in an annual weekend outdoor education program at Camp Bernie (a “Y” camp in Port Murray, NJ), where they meet individual challenges and learn the meaning of cooperative living with others. This weekend brings together students, volunteer staff members and parents for the purposes of building social confidences and unity. Students are provided with physical and mental challenges which help them demonstrate their social maturity and personal strengths while developing independence and responsibility.

The component of community outreach has been expanded to include seniors and parents assisting students in an academic setting. These programs STARS (Seniors Teaching and Reinforcing Students) and Parents as Partners are very successful in building a bridge between community and the school. Another successful program is the Care One/Bridges program. Fifth “grade” classes are linked to residents at the Care One facility for seniors. They welcome the fifth grade classes as they prepare seasonal decorations and engage in activities with the residents. Fifth grade students must complete and document ten hours of community service in order to receive a link during the Linking Program. Our students have an opportunity to further the concepts of our Unity Program as they participate in community service.

The Lore School UNITY Program is woven throughout all parts of the school’s curriculum. It addresses many of the Core Curriculum Content Standards now put forth by the New Jersey Department of Education. The UNITY Program is a well rounded, exciting and most importantly, “successful” program. It has enhanced the school climate as well as the relationship between students and staff members. Students have the opportunity to grow in a nurturing, educational environment that is both socially and academically stimulating. The goal of the UNITY Program is to have all Lore School students become productive members of our global society and to be better prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. It is hoped that the social skills they learn while at Lore School will assist our students in living in a multicultural world where mutual respect for individual differences will bring about peace and harmony.

