

## Values and virtues - The Principled Academy poises itself to go virtual

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As First Gen couples who have been directly trained by our TP, we are uniquely qualified to share our wisdom and insights on Values and Virtues with America's young people. I have been blessed to work with Dr. Durst and other dedicated First and Second Gen teachers for the past 35 years at The Principled Academy in California. Although we have always taught standard academic subjects, our "secret sauce" has been character education and community service.

Let me give you an example of character education that happened recently. When the floods devastated a third of the land mass of Pakistan, I thought through a plan in my mind of helping my privileged grandchildren do community service to help the children who lost everything in the floods. When I realized I had all the supplies we would need, I shared with six of my grandchildren (aged 4 to 10) my concerns for the children of Pakistan and showed a few photos of children in the flood waters (from the UNICEF website). I explained briefly that for many years I have been a supporter of UNICEF by giving donations annually.

I asked the six kids if they had any ideas about how we here in Berkeley could help the kids impacted by the flood. An older grandchild puzzled, "By giving money?" I immediately shaped the conversation by asking, "I am wondering how we can all work together to make money here in Berkeley today that we can give to help the kids in Pakistan. Is there something we could make and sell right here?" (I had in mind - from the beginning of the conversation - that we could pick lemons from my daughter's tree, squeeze them, make homemade lemonade and sell it right in front of our house.)

Right away the kids with the lemon tree in their yard suggested picking lemons, making lemonade, and selling it. I exclaimed, "What a FABULOUS idea! I think I have some posterboard. (I had in fact bought enough previously so that each child could fashion a sign explaining we are selling homemade lemonade to support children in Pakistan through UNICEF.)

I wrote out a "word hoard" on a white board with words they might want to use in their posters: UNICEF, Pakistan, floods, lemonade, donation. You could hear a pin drop in the play room while each grandchild created a totally unique poster with colored markers.

After finishing posters, they helped to pick, wash and squeeze lemons. Others helped to set up their foldable play table and chairs in the front yard. Older ones helped stir the sugar and water to make syrup, then to stir in the lemon juice. Of course, everyone was on the tasting team to determine when the lemonade was perfect! Other grandchildren fetched large disposable cups, ice, ladles, etc. and set it up in the front yard.

Their enthusiasm was inspiring! Some of them brandished their signs and called out to passersby to help the flood victims from Pakistan. Others engaged neighbors in surprisingly informed conversations (given their ages) about why they were taking donations for UNICEF.

Here are two of them with the jar of donations they collected. The next day after school, we took the carefully counted money to the bank and purchased a cashier's check, which we ceremoniously placed into a mailbox, addressed to UNICEF.

Surprisingly, I have been able to use this experience to help my older grandkids to get a larger perspective when they are upset that they can't have something they want. I once remarked, "That's a First World problem" about something they wanted but couldn't have at the moment. They were curious about what I meant. I asked them to remember why we had sold lemonade. They worked out in their own thinking that the kids in Pakistan had lost virtually everything material, and that their own "problem" was very minor in comparison. Their upset feelings disappeared.

Dr. Durst and I are inviting you to join with us to add your own wisdom and insights on sharing Values and Virtues with younger generations as The Principled Academy poises itself to go virtual. We believe young people all over America, including our own children and grandchildren, are hungry for the clarity of principled discernment and decision-making.

Dr. Durst and I propose setting up a regular Zoom call where everyone is invited to share insights and input. We hope you will participate by joining us for the first Zoom community forum on Values and Virtues on Saturday morning, February 4, at 10:00am. Please email me at [kseher.tpa@gmail.com](mailto:kseher.tpa@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom invitation.

Best wishes and may our Heavenly Parent bless you and yours!