

10/16/09

DD and Sterling,

I am usually not very taken with in-service programs. Being a teacher of twenty six years, I have been through quite a lot of “before school begins in-service”, “during the school year in-service”, and “summer in-service”. Needless to say this year was a surprise.

When I heard the introduction, “Brothers by Choice”, I was intrigued but still unsure of what was going to happen. Several questions went through my mind like “Who are these guys?” and “Are they really brothers?” When the program started, I began to sit up in my chair. Your story truly touched this teacher’s heart and I began to see several of my students in your faces. I found myself so intensely enthralled when you two told of your meeting and becoming friends that I began laughing out loud and wiping tears from my eyes at the same time. It truly touched and softened my heart. That is not my usual reaction at teacher in-services of the past.

I have thought of you often this year. I have several students in my class that have a home environment that would shock their friends and teachers. Since I teach the ESL classes, I do home visits and get to know the families quite well. When you shared the story of driving up to DD’s house, I knew what you were talking about. I too have felt the same thoughts of how could such a wonderful well rounded student live in these conditions. As a teacher, I never know by looking at the students what their home life might be like. All students have a fire in their eyes and a thirst for life that this is sometimes masked. What they go through at home before they walk in the corridor of the school building can be the biggest lesson of the day.

I have several students that I wished could spend some time with you. I think you would make an unbelievable difference in these young adults. They are at the fork in the road and need to choose the right path. I am afraid for them and wished they could find a “Brother by Choice” to be their friend, competitor, and advocate.

I took several things with me that day at in-service. Compassion: I don’t know what is happening to my students at home. Acceptance: Everyone needs a cheer squad to become an “All American” in their own eyes—it is too long a road to go it alone. Family and love: Is absolutely for EVERYONE even if you are faced with a situation that you need to choose your brothers and sisters.

I thank God for you two young men and appreciate your insight to talk to the teachers--the pulse of a school building. Hopefully you will be able to visit the school and share your message with our students. You make a difference.

Teacher by Choice,
Gay Becker