



There is (always) Good News!

A column by Circle Pines Mayor Dave Bartholomay for the Quad Community Press Newspaper (7/3/2018)

Optimism sometimes seems in short supply, partly because fear seems to be pretty effective as a motivator. So it may seem natural that as people worry about the uncertainty of the future, they get nervous, anxious, and perhaps go as far as becoming pessimistic.

But think about how this all plays out for them. They vote based on fear, they make purchase decisions based on uncertainty, and their view of the world and their own future is of a glass half full -- indeed, a diminished view of what is truly possible.

I want to point out a different vision, one held by 340 of our recently-graduated seniors from Centennial High School. On April 26th, they held a 'Service Day', where they voluntarily went out to 22 sites within our communities visiting senior facilities, helping at elementary schools, and cleaning up our parks and trails. Organized by the students themselves and supported by our Chain of Lake's Rotary club, the students demonstrated their commitment to serving others, which makes quite a statement about their character, the upbringing provided by their families, and the tremendous education they received at our Centennial schools. Working together we are raising the type of young people that understand their responsibilities and demonstrate gratitude, all of which sends out an optimistic message about their future and our future!

They are the kind of young people who have a world of opportunity in front of them, one where a positive attitude and a desire to serve others will lead to a good life. When they have challenges, which they undoubtedly will, they will see them as just one more lesson to be learned, one more mountain to climb. Their attitude will help them surround themselves with others who believe in a bright future, and their behavior and can-do spirit will make them a success in work and in relationships.

I'm hopeful that fear and scarcity won't drive their lives and that they will be grateful for their blessings and determined to overcome their obstacles. And I believe our Centennial communities will continue supporting them and the students coming up behind them in our school system. As I read the latest school Observer newsletter that arrived in the mail last week, I was thrilled to see the community support for scholarships to graduating seniors, and to read how during their final week these students returned to visit their elementary schools wearing their caps and gowns. Can you imagine how cool that seemed to the young kids! And did you know that dozens and dozens of these seniors served as mentors to elementary students during the school year and that they were winning awards and driving our Centennial High School to be a Silver Medalist among all U.S. high schools! If you didn't get a chance to read the latest school newsletter, look for it in the 'News' section of the school website at www.isd12.org

Maybe our young people have already realized the wisdom of the Optimist Club Creed, which in part states: "Promise yourself to make all your friends feel that there is something in them; to think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best; to give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others; and to be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble." My monthly Optimist Club meeting provides a steady reminder that I can do better and that being positive will make a difference!