

The Good Project

Newsletter: November/December 2013

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Dear Friend of The Good Project,

We hope that this newsletter finds you well. This month's newsletter features initiatives focused on teaching and applying Good Work. We also provide insight on a Good Work concept, "Rings of Responsibility" and share other interesting news and updates. If you utilize Good Work concepts in your teaching, we would love to hear from you! Further, if you have ideas for future newsletters, please email Paromita De at paromita_de@harvard.edu. We hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter, and we wish you happy holidays!

Sincerely,
The Good Team

Good Work in Upper Elementary and Middle School Years



We recently caught up with two teachers who work with upper elementary and middle school students and use Good Work concepts in their classes. Tim Coleman, an ethics teacher and

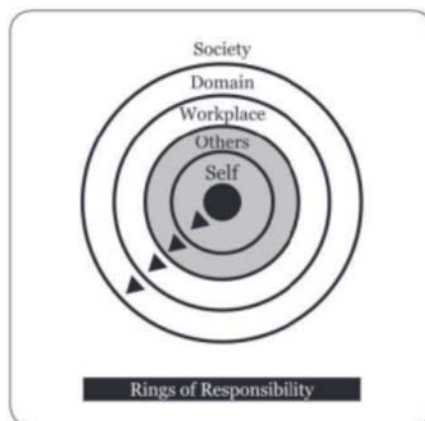
campus director at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School in Washington, DC, first became acquainted with Good Work when he attended the Project Zero Classroom. Tim told us that he was "taken with ethical thinking," and as the teacher of service-learning and ethics classes, he has found presenting dilemmas to students as an excellent way to promote their ethical thinking. Coleman started contemplating how students would be able to grasp these concepts within the realm of work. After attending the GoodWork Conference in March 2013 and going through the GoodWork Toolkit, Tim developed a "Code of Ethics" project for his students. For this project, students get involved in activities such as discussing why we need ethical thinking and interviewing a professional such as a doctor or an accountant. Currently, students are involved in creating

their own personal codes of ethics.

June Weissman, a teacher for gifted students in 4th/5th grade in Wyckoff, New Jersey, helped to pilot the original GoodWork Toolkit. She has also had her lesson plans featured on thegoodproject.org and was featured in Howard Gardner's book, *Responsibility at Work* in a chapter on the GoodWork Toolkit. June recently used Good Work concepts to create an interesting assignment for her students: she asked them to consider the possibility that, 200 years from now we may be colonizing other planets. Based on this assumption, June challenged her students to consider the ethical implications of this act. Students wrote plays where they touched on issues such as whether or not we should model Mars in Earth's image, what responsibility we have to Earth and our people, and what kind of differences we might make on any other forms of life on the new planet.

Tim and June are considering bringing together different lesson plans aimed at upper elementary and middle school students and publishing them on thegoodproject.org - we will keep you posted on when these lesson plans become available! If you are a middle school teacher and interested in collaborating on this work, please be in touch.

Good Idea of the Month: Rings of Responsibility



In our professional lives, it is possible to see how one role we take on may have different meanings depending on context and scope. You might be a teacher by profession, but specifically it may also mean that you

are the 5th grade teacher for a class of 25 students, a faculty member at an elementary school, a member of

the teaching profession for 30 years who coaches junior teachers in best practices, and an advocate for teacher's rights. When we look at the various sets of responsibilities we have to different groups, we are looking at the rings of responsibility. Understanding the influence of rings of responsibility can help us to visualize the full impact of our decisions.

Barendsen and Fischman state in *The GoodWork Toolkit* that these rings consist of "...responsibility to self; responsibility to others (including family, peers, and colleagues); responsibility to the domain or profession; and responsibility to society." When we take these rings into consideration, we can grasp the pros and cons of different decisions we can make. If a hospital administrator had the ability to decide whether or not to limit the number of patients that the hospital would see in a day, one of the major cons would be that potential patients beyond a certain number would be turned away for the day and they would not receive treatment. However, with fewer patients, there could be more focus on adhering to standards for quality medical care for the current patients, the hospital could become more efficient in processing patient data, and doctors and nurses could feel less rushed and able to spend more time with patients.

Barendsen and Fischman also state in *The GoodWork Toolkit* that "Our own theory of GoodWork presumes that as individuals develop ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, rings of responsibilities widen. In other words, as individuals become more concerned with others around them, they develop more responsibility, and act on these responsibilities to make ethically sound decisions not only for themselves, but for others they care about, and for people and societies they may never know."

*What rings of responsibility impact your decisions?
How do you take the different rings into consideration when you make decisions?*

Excerpt from Interview with Design for

Change's Sanjli Gidwaney and Claire Mongeau



The winning team from South Dakota of the 2013 Design for Change School Challenge, at the "Be The Change" conference in India.

Our partners at Design for Change held their annual "Be The Change" conference in September 2013. This year's winning team for the Design for Change School Challenge hails from South Dakota, USA. We sat down with

Sanjli Gidwaney and Claire Mongeau from Design for Change USA to discuss this year's conference and the team from South Dakota. Below is an excerpt from the full interview, which you can see on our website [here](#).

So you just returned from the Design for Change conference and brought the American winners of the contest on a remarkable journey; can you tell us about these students and the project that brought them to India?

Sanjli:Our students live in a Native American community, it's called Pine Ridge Reservation, and their school is called the Crazy Horse School. They experience several different challenges in their community in terms of dropout rates, in terms of alcohol and drugs, and one of the most horrifying stats is that half of the students don't make it to graduation. So they'll have a class of 25 and end up with 12. They felt that the dropout rates was a major issue they wanted to address. As they worked through the "feel, imagine, do, share" Design for Change framework, they learned, in peeling back the layers, that students drop out because they are resorting to drugs and alcohol. Well, why are they resorting to drugs and alcohol? Because there's a lot of boredom on the reservation, there isn't anything to do; there aren't a lot of healthy activities for students. So their whole project was to address that underlying issue. They went really deep into the issue and recognized that they need to address the boredom. So what they did

was a whole day of very healthy activities like sports, crafts, and quilt work. They organized this whole great event to bring the community together; it was actually on a parent's night. They also brought the opportunity to express their concerns about the dropout rates and why it's important that they start to talk about it. We were just really blown away by their project and their thoughtfulness and the passion that the teacher displayed in supporting them.

Claire: This group was of high school students, juniors and seniors I believe, from the school. The students that we had the chance to bring to the conference were two of the students who just recently graduated and one young woman who is entering into her senior year.

How many students were involved in the project?

Sanjli: There's several students I think, 12 in total. As for the students who came on the trip, there were two who really loved the project, and another student who came on the trip who was not directly involved with the project before but is continuing the project. Now that they're back on the reservation she has enough opportunity to continue the momentum that the seniors had created. It was important for her to be on this trip as well so she can experience what Design for Change is really all about and feel a part of the movement.

Who are these students and what are they like? What kind of interests do they have?

Sanjli: Amber is the youngest and she is still at Crazy Horse School, she hasn't graduated yet. She is wonderful, thoughtful. She processes a lot, she analyzes a lot, there's really a lot going on in her head, the wheels are constantly churning. We've spent a lot of time with her.

Claire: She's a cowgirl actually! She competes in bull riding, she is definitely one of those quiet leader types, and the teachers who came out of the conference with us said that she is going to be an amazing influence on

her classmates, so she goes back and continues the projects she is very motivational to other people around her. She is thoughtful and also has a very good attitude.

Sanjli: There's one story that really stood out from the conference, one of the teams had a young boy from India, and he was sharing his project about collecting stories from elders so that their stories don't ever die. There are so many values and lessons that can be taught from those stories. And she (Amber) nudged Hara who was one of the teachers on the trip and said "our elders have so many stories, this is something we need to be doing." She is constantly thinking about what more could be done.

Claire: The thing about why it was so important for Amber to come on this trip and for her to be one of the students to share the story of the project was that she was actually a dropout. She dropped out of school and then came back and made it into the proper grade she should be in. She worked really hard.

Sanjli: She's a perfect role model.

Claire: Exactly

Sanjli: (Another student) Brandy just loves life. She is an eternal optimist, she is just happy and always just seeing the brighter side of things.

Claire: She is just one of those people who has a lot of joy in her heart, loves learning and meeting new people. She actually dances the shawl dance which is one of the Lakota traditions. One of her stories is that she had seen this shawl dance but she never actually participated. Then one day at a pow-wow she decided to give it a try and she actually got second in the competition. So since then she just really loved participating in that part of her culture and she got a chance to perform at the conference in front of people from all over the world. She said that it meant so much to her and she just imagined her family around her, and then she got to share that. She's hilarious, a lot of fun, has a lot of zest.

Sanjli: Wakan, he is 19 years old, and is just a dynamite. He is very articulate and has a very spiritual side of him. He has had an extremely tough life in terms of the circumstances that he's had. He's lost a brother to drinking and driving and in that same accident was his sister who's now paralyzed. He has spent a lot of time raising his own siblings. He is a father and a very responsible one at that; he's really trying to do right by his child. He has a great presence. Wakan is incredibly talented - he has a great lyrical talent, he writes rap and music. He wrote a song for the conference and there's just a really great story about him during the conference. Wakan was asked to perform at the conference because we knew he had written a rap, but twenty minutes before he said "I can't do it. I'm scared, I don't know if I'll do a good job." But he didn't want to disappoint any of us. So we just told him "Go out there, do a good job, do your best. This is a great opportunity for you to shine and share your talent." But we left it up to him, and sure enough he did perform and became an instant celebrity at the conference. Everybody was in love with him and it really became the conference anthem because it was all about "we can be the change." His rap was all about being the change and doing right by your people and your community, so he just kept with that momentum throughout the conference. In fact, during the conference there was this time where Riverside School (who hosts this conference) shuts down a street and holds an event called "Street Smart". There are crafts, there are stalls, and there are activities for kids. There were 2,000 people there and there was a stage where there were various performers. Wakan got on stage with one of the Riverside students and with a couple of students from Denmark, and they did a collective performance. It was the most incredible thing in the world; it was like a concert with over a thousand people watching. They did it without music and it was very impromptu, they must have only decided a couple of hours before to put it together. These are the kinds of moments I think will live on with them and with all of us for a very long time. They just have the guts to put themselves out there.

Claire: It was really amazing to see how they grew

over the course of the conference too. Wakan told me "I always wanted to be a rapper, I always wanted to be famous but I didn't think I'd have the opportunity." After he found the courage in himself to perform the first night, he performed two other times during the conference. That first night he performed in front of people from so many different counties. That was the third time he had been on stage ever.

Sanjli: He said that nobody ever comes out and watches him when he performs on the reservation and this is among the first times that he's had to experience what it is like to be in front of a crowd and people appreciating him.

Claire: The fact that all of them were so open and willing to share. As Brandy said, they come from very hard circumstances such that it's amazing that they even got themselves through school to graduate, and now they're trying to help other people like that. Brandy said it's not about looking to the past, it's about looking towards the future, doing right by our community. The fact that it was incredible to have them being the ones representing the United States for the first time and that they are able to tell stories that most people around the world don't even hear about or know exist. They are such an amazing example of what it is to be Native American and to be advocates. It was just incredible.

Sanjli: They hadn't been on a plane, they hadn't been out of the state, they had never been in a hotel, they didn't have a state IDs and we had to get them state IDs because they weren't being recognized as American citizens. We got them state IDs, passports, visas. They hadn't experienced what it was like to have a big fancy mean in a hotel or what it meant to be on a plane.

Claire: They didn't have air-conditioning, they didn't have phones. So they were just great, it was just amazing.

Sanjli: (At the same time) I think they never lost sight

of who they were, and I mean that in the most beautiful way. They never lost sight of their culture, their heritage, and their people. They knew why they were there. They were representing their community. Although they enjoyed being in a hotel - at one point Wakan was spinning around his room saying "I feel like a king!" - it was all for a reason. Any of it wasn't in vain.

Claire: Every single day, and pretty much every conversation you had with them you felt a deep sense of gratitude that they had towards everyone who helped them. They would say "I never thought I would have a passport, and now I can go anywhere in the world. I can do so much." And it wasn't so much of them saying "This is the way it should be, I deserve this." I feel like they were given positive feedback to be more themselves, and so they can take that back to the reservation.

Recent Blogs

[Lessons Learned on Inclusivity](#)

(October 23, 2013)

Blake O'Connor, Bezos Scholar alum and current University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill senior, provides his insights on the importance of inclusivity.

[The 3 E's of Leadership](#)

(October 31, 2013)

Reha Bublani, Head-Training at The Global Education and Leadership Foundation, discusses her recent presentation on the connection between good work and leadership at the Project Zero Perspectives conference in London.

[Q & A with Eric Liu, Founder of Citizen University and Civic Collaboratory](#)

(November 12, 2013)

Lynn Barendsen recently sat down with Eric Liu, a former speechwriter for President Clinton, to discuss how he formed the Civic Collaboratory.

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