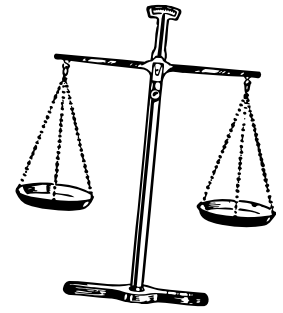


Monthly Ethics and Values Session at BHI Academy: Grace Valentine



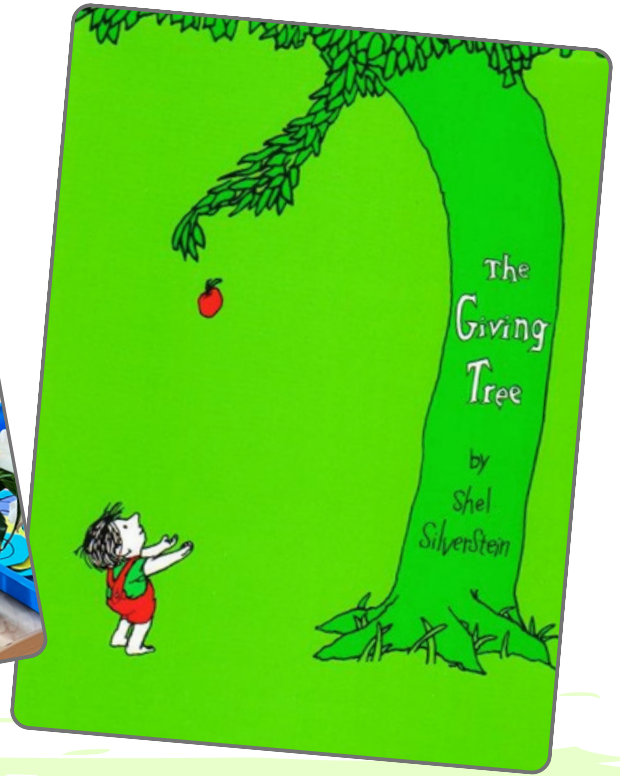
The word confirmation means to confirm something as authentic—maybe even proven valid. Confirmation also removes doubts, and it is from that definition that I share another spectacular moment at the school: this month's Values and Ethics session with island resident, Grace Valentine. She started by tying in her passion for gardening and shared a wealth of knowledge with the scholars about herbs, fruits, and vegetables. As a former pre-school educator and medical social worker, Ms. Grace was very pleased with the abundance of questions (I must confess our scholars are all very inquisitive and highly intelligent beings!). Even with our three-questions-per-student rule (just a little something our school created to show respect for our speaker's time, manage expectations for the rest of the day, and teach how taking turns allows for a certain ebb and flow in the classroom), she was still bombarded with so many questions that Ms. Biegel had to create a parking lot for questions for the next time Ms. Grace returns.

So why was she such a big hit? Simple ... She entered the school room and found a common bond with the children.



So why was she such a big hit? Simple ... She entered the school room and found a common bond with the children: their love for plants and Mother Nature. **Then she did something wonderful: She read Shel Silverstein's book The Giving Tree and that sealed the deal for our scholars. She invited everyone to share their perspectives on what they thought the book meant.** I don't think she or our class was ready for the amazing discussion. When the youngest asked if the boy took everything from the tree Ms. Grace responded, no, the tree was happy to give it all—there is a subtle but powerful difference between taking and giving. One of the oldest believed the intention of the book was the message that it is better to give than to receive. On and on the dialogue went, with students connecting to the richness of this classic book and all it shared and taught.

But what was so astonishing was our Acorns being able to articulate their insights in their own words with absolute assurance and power. That is what brings me back to where I started: confirmation. This type of story being read in our classroom and fully comprehended by children ages 5 to 15 confirms that our whole-child approach works, **these future leaders have an incredible grasp on comprehending words, thoughts, actions, and yes, their feelings—as any good human being should.** Thank you, BHI Chapel, for choosing another phenomenal speaker in Ms. Grace. What she did not know was, while I was taking photos and listening to her address each scholars' responses, I couldn't contain the tears. This is a profound story and it was delivered by an extraordinary island resident. With heartfelt gratitude, I thank you, Ms. Grace, and BHI Chapel, for being such wonderful ambassadors for this program. It takes this Village.



Need more information about BHI Academy?

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