



NEW PLYMOUTH BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

TE KURA TAMATĀNE O NGĀMOTU

Assembly Speech : Monday, May 18 Community Service

Congratulations to Oscar Robertson, one of 8 boys selected in a New Zealand Basketball Development team. Well done Oscar.

Abe Larson and Calum Sutherland just won the school section for the Urban Rogaine competition in Wellington yesterday. Superb effort.

There were two Head Borders from the 1960's looking around the school last week and I caught up with them after their tour of the school. Boys, I am very pleased to tell you they were so impressed with what they saw. Their first impression of the school was from one of you. This boy didn't only politely greet the two men who were clearly lost, but he asked if he could assist them. Our student then not only explained to them where the office was but escorted them to the office personally.

I have talked about respecting our visitors before so well done. Two proud old boys and I couldn't have been prouder that day. They have also been to the school twice in the past 5 years and were very impressed with the improvement around uniform. If that boy who displayed initiative can come and see me after assembly at my office, I would like to meet him and thank him for being the example.

Believe it or not, I and the staff were young once, we probably even thought we were cool at some stage of our lives.

We thought no one cared about what we did or how we acted. No one would notice us enough to be hurt by our actions. It is not until you are older and wiser and, balder in my case, that you realise that was not the case.

When you are at school or in town you think no one notices you. You are invisible. I thought that once too. No one cares what you do or knows who you are. It is actually the opposite. Everyone notices, observes and judges you boys. I mean everyone.

Why is this important to realise?

We rely on the community for a number of things, we rely on them to support us, send their boys here, funding, many of the community (old boys) give generously which enable us to have cultural and sports programmes and incredible facilities. We would not have half the facilities we have today without this support. Imagine the school with no main gym, no library, no swimming pool, no assembly hall, no gully ground.

Community support isn't a nice thing to have, we must have it in order to provide you with the opportunities and world class facilities you have at this school.

That's not the main reason we respect our community and conduct ourselves with pride.

The main reason is because it's just the right thing to do. Being a good person and a person who cares about others and their environment is the right thing to do.

You can call that social consciousness, social responsibility or just simply, being a good man. Being the example.

What I want you all to think about is, when you are in town, when you are outside of school, you are not invisible. Remember that you are carrying the biggest billboard in NP on your back saying 'NPBHS' on one side, 'youth of today' on the other. You represent those things.

Some of the community don't rate the youth of today. Some think you are lazy, ill-disciplined, disrespectful, lacking morals. That is not true, I don't subscribe to that. I couldn't be more impressed with the youth of today.

I don't think some community comments are a fair reflection of the fine young men we have here. However, the only way to change some people's perception, is through action. Consistent action, and demonstration of all that is good with the youth of today.

I really encourage you all to think of others when you are in the community. Think of your language, think of your actions, think of how you could help someone in the community, think of how you could improve our communities environment.

It maybe by picking up rubbish at your sports field, helping someone across the road. Holding your head up and looking smart in your uniform. Smiling and saying good morning to a visitor at school.

The small things matter, the small things are noticed and the small things reflect on you and all of us here in this room.

Remember, if one of your friends gets it wrong, it's ok to help them, refocus them, it's ok to say to them don't swear there are young children around who can hear. Pick up that rubbish you put down. Shall we help that mother struggling with a push chair? You will be amazed at the response you will get and the positive impact it will have on your life.

There is a saying 'pay it forward' which I am sure you have all heard. Do something nice for others and the community without seeking anything in return and you will get something in return. Maybe not immediately but it will come back to you tenfold.

Paying it forward, thinking every day how can I help, how can I improve the environment is one of the greatest things you can do with your time and energy.

Some of you may have read and know about Gabby Devine the incredible 13 year old girl who passed away last week. Gabby carried out more than 1000 random acts of kindness. Which included giving presents to sick children and their parents, giving boxes of Easter treats to families and taking breakfast up to the children's ward on Christmas Eve.

If every one of us got up every morning and thought like Gabby who can I help? Who can I do something nice for? How can I help the community, with no agenda or no expectation of anything in return the world would be an amazing place.

There are many examples of us supporting the community and paying it forward regularly, the Smile Box campaign is one of many valuable community projects that we do get involved with making a significant contribution to others in need.

I would like to recognise all those who have contributed to this cause. When the community unite for a common cause to 'do good', nothing is more powerful.

Remember that billboard. Like it or not you are wearing it all day, every day. NPBHS, Youth of Today.