



A Youth Education Success Story

I've been lucky enough to work in local schools on behalf of Family Transition Place (FTP) for the last 14 years. As a result, I've seen hope in countless different ways. It has been as subtle as a teenager saying, "The most important thing I've learned in class is to treat my girlfriend with the respect she deserves." It has been as obvious as a 10-year old standing-up for a classmate who is being bullied and responding afterward, "I did it because it was the right thing to do." Hope is the norm in my job.

In fact, it's so common that sometimes you forget to appreciate what you're seeing. But sometimes the message is so clear and obvious that you can't help but marvel at the gift you have been given.

A couple of years ago on March break, my family and I were on a mini-holiday in Toronto. We were staying over to see a live show that my daughter had been dying to attend. As usual, we had to visit the souvenir stand before the show.

"Shouldn't we wait until after the show to buy something? What if you don't like the show?" I asked my daughter.

I received the "you just don't get it" look in return. She then responded with a rapid-fire sequence: "I've already seen the show, Dad. I know I love it. I just haven't seen it live. So yeah I want a hoody."

Then without taking a breath she leaned in and quietly whispered, "Dad, that guy is staring at you."

I glanced over and saw one of the theatre ushers awkwardly looking in my direction like he was wondering if it was okay to come closer. He looked familiar but I couldn't quite place him; it was obvious he knew exactly who I was. He slowly walked towards me and nervously said, "Excuse me...is your name Travis? Aren't you that FTP guy?"

I acknowledged that I was certainly both of those things.

"You might not remember me, but I was in a boys group with you at Island Lake Public School. I just wanted you to know that the group really helped me. I wasn't doing too well and was getting into some trouble. That group made a big difference for me."

I stood there stunned. I remembered the group and I now remembered him as well. We chatted for a few minutes and I learned that he was in his second year of University. That meant he had been in the group six years earlier.

As I turned to go, the usher said one more thing, "Remember those cards we made with the positive compliments on them? I still have mine and I look at it all the time."

Hope is many things. On that day for me, it was a young boy getting the chance to realize his own self-worth and making the most of that opportunity.

Story submitted by FTP Youth Educator, Travis Greenley.