

## **Principal at Canyon Park in Northshore**

When I started as a principal in Northshore I heard and saw some negatives. They had a very high discipline procedure so that as many as seventy students each week took a trip to the two Assistant Principals offices. I wanted the school to shift to teachers moving towards treating each student as an individual. There were many wonderful teachers on the staff and with their help we were able to design a program relative to discipline that helped the students looking at themselves and being individuals. The junior high was viewed as the worst of five when I got there and by the time I left, after six years, there we were able to take children just a few in an entire month and minor mistakes could be handled easily and responsibly for the most part. We formed teams with teachers and where teams couldn't be organized the teachers would schedule times to work together to provide what students needed as individuals. We did lots of wonderful activities with students so we focused on students as individuals in each teacher's classroom. One day a helicopter from Channel Seven flew over all 950 students who had shaped themselves as CPJH on the football field. The students had seen the reporter, Margaret Larson, in the gym and when the presentation was over we said we wanted to wave good bye. KIRO worked with us but the students felt great about being in a shape together that had them wind up on television newscast as the C P J H students.

Did that one event make lots of a difference? No it didn't. However, if a visitor would look at all the options and experiences planned and available for students they would understand. Even though it is helpful for all the people to stand up together it is crucial that they as individuals are always recognized.

We had three eighth classes working together on a project about keeping the environment safe. Each group had to work together and decide together what role each person in each group would pursue. They agreed upon that and then every student was able to work. The project lasted about six weeks with lots of meetings and work time. At the end the student groups were to be evaluated in the cafeteria room to set up a presentation of their proposition. A group of local university scientists came in to judge the plans. It was amazing to watch each student based on choosing in the project what they wanted to do come out fantastically. If you didn't know these students you would believe you were watching honor students. In fact, you were watching students who were able to be honor students because they were proud of seeing themselves. While I was there I received the ACORN award and was very pleased that I got an award based upon how the students were doing. I learned further that recognizing the individuality of each child is an important and essential to trying to help students learn. I was taken to New York to a conference with a bunch of other principals and by the new superintendent in Northshore. I decided at that time to move to Seattle to work with students, parents, and teachers there.