

PARENTS' CORNER

When Danny Holstege began kindergarten at Adams Street Protestant Reformed School in the fall of 1988, he represented the third generation of commitment to Protestant Reformed education. Danny's grandmother, Jan (Stursma) VandenBerg, was in the fifth class to graduate from Adams Street, and his grandfather, Len Holstege, was one of the early graduates of Hope PR School. Danny's parents, Jim and Kathy Holstege, attended PR grade schools and are graduates of Covenant Christian High School.

In a recent issue of Perspectives, we interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Engelsma, parents of twelve, about their 40-year involvement with Protestant Reformed education. In the following article, we share with our readers the thoughts and expectations of a young couple at the very beginning of their "education" — their education as parents and supporters of one of our PR schools. The interviewer is again one of our Perspectives staff members, this time Mr. Gary VanDerSchaaf.

GVS: What do you think makes a good school?

Jim: First of all, God-centered, Bible-based instruction, in all of the subjects, in the truth of Scripture as confessed by the PRCs. Such a school is possible, of course, only when the parents, and the home-life established by those parents, is God-centered and Bible-based. If the family-life of the home is not God-centered, then any school supported by that family will someday fail. Secondly, the teachers have to believe and be like the parents; they, too, must be godly men and women.

GVS: What other qualities do

you think a teacher should have?

Kathy: A teacher should love his job, and love the students he's teaching. It's got to be hard, but a parent wants a teacher to love and treat his child the same as the parent does.

Jim: A teacher's first concern should be with the spiritual side of education. But he should also keep current with educational developments, with the best teaching techniques.

GVS: What do you expect the school to do for your child?

Jim: To prepare the child for life in his or her own family. For my sons, the Lord willing, to be the fathers and heads in their own

homes, and for my daughter to be the mother of her family in her home. That's *my* responsibility, to prepare them for life, and if our schools are parental, their responsibility is the same.

GVS: How would you like to see the home and school work together to achieve that goal?

Jim: The home and school must communicate. Parents must let the teacher know that, if there is any problem with learning or discipline, the teacher can always go to the parents. Teachers must go to the parents, and the parents must give the teachers the assurance and confidence to do that.

GVS: How can parents "assure" a teacher of support?

Kathy: By telling your child, first of all, that what the teacher says *goes*. Never speaking badly of the teacher in front of the child is important, too, I think. It's not good for parents to mean-mouth the teacher in front of the child, and to be so quick to believe anything their child says about the teacher or school. Even if you think your child is right and that the teacher is wrong, never cut down the teacher in front of the child, or another parent, for that matter. Go to the teacher personally and privately.

GVS: Do you think the present system of conferences twice a year is sufficient com-

munication?

Jim: I wouldn't be opposed to more meetings. I don't want a special meeting only when there is a problem. And if things are going well, I want to hear that, too.

GVS: Given the importance of communication between home and school, do you think you have enough "input" in the education of your child?

Jim: The maximum input, I guess, would be home schooling. That's one extreme — 100% input. But we are sending our child to our school, so 100% input is impossible. But I definitely feel it's the parents' duty to do more than sign a few report cards and go to two conferences a year. That's the other extreme.

Kathy: You just expect the school to do its job. I guess parents get kind of lazy in being involved in their child's education.

GVS: What are some ways for the parent to be involved?

Jim: Again, communication. The *home* shouldn't hesitate to call the *school* from time to time. Parents can visit classrooms and learn a little about what their child's class is like. Communication is all-important. A parent will have to help sometime with homework, but the school has to let the home know that there is work.

GVS: Just as a point of

interest, you mentioned home schooling as an extreme. Did you ever consider home schooling?

Jim: No. If the only alternative to home schooling was the public school, we would home school. But our schools do exist, and we think they can do a better job than we can.

Kathy: Part of our baptismal vows is our calling to educate or to see to that education. Regarding formal education, we think that the school can do that better than our home.

GVS: So you're committed to the school. What are some of the ways a parent can show that commitment?

Jim: First of all, make sure that the tuition gets paid, and that it gets paid first. Parents have to make tuition one of the top budget priorities. Secondly, make sure teachers are paid adequately. Many of our teachers could get better paying jobs elsewhere. They make sacrifices to teach our children.

Kathy: And let the teacher know how much you appreciate what he or she is doing. Stand behind the school in the eyes of the children; let the child know that those at school are in authority over him.

GVS: Any other ways to show support? Kathy, you're a pretty fair artist. If you were asked to volunteer your time to teach a few art classes, would you do it?

Kathy: If someone were to ask, I'd do it in a minute.

GVS: How about you, Jim?

Jim: Men have to be ready to be board members. I feel awkward saying that, because I had to turn down a nomination to the board last year, due to extenuating circumstances. But I still think it's a father's responsibility to serve on the board.*

Ed. note: Jim is as good as his word. Soon after this interview he was again nominated, he accepted, and was elected to a three-year term. ■■■

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Between the Bookends

Sue Looyenga

PRE-SCHOOL and PRIMARY

Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear? by Nancy White Carlstrom, illustrated by Bruce Degen, Scholastic, Inc; New York, NY, 1989, 25 pp., (\$3.50 paper).

This book is quickly becoming a favorite of my pre-school and kindergarten daughters, who love its rhythmic cadence as we “march” through the day with