

YOUNGER AND WISER

Traditionally, at the SMS eighth grade recognition program, the address to the class is given by the incoming SHS Student Council President. As a middle school teacher, I attended every year. There is only one speech I remember because even though it was presented to the 8th grade students, it spoke to me and I tried to apply his advice to my life. The speaker advised to the students to pick out an upper classman they want to be like, just like he had done four years prior. He suggested to choose a high school student whom they admired and desired to be like, then join the clubs and activities that person joins, follow and emulate that student. He advised them to imagine how this student would react to a situation and then do what they believe their role model would do. This practice will, he said, lead you in a good direction, allow you to reach your goals and cause you to be a better person. I have never forgotten that speech from student, B.J. Burenheide, who is today a Professor at KSU. Over the years, I have applied this same advice to my own life and it has helped me solve some problems and be a better wife, mother and friend.

Then about a year ago, a young family moved to town and I knew they were having trouble finding a house to buy. Visiting with Connie one day, I asked her how she and her family were surviving living in their little rental house. Her reply has stuck with me and my brain conjures it up often when I need a reality check. She told me that all they don't have in their rental house are just "first world problems." She reminded me that most of what we don't have is "nothing we can't live without." Her down to earth attitude inspired me to remember that I have more possessions than probably 90% of the world's people will ever have and most likely will never have. This new young family has been "Joy" to our family and to our community!

Most often we are taught by, and we learn from older and wiser people whose wisdom has developed over time from experience. But I am suggesting that we should keep ourselves open to learning from our children, our youth, and from those who are less experienced than us. So, continue to learn from our elders, but listen and pay attention to our youth.

I do not believe generosity is an innate trait (although most parents of multiple children know what some seem to be born with a giving spirit and others have a hard time sharing a toy). But I do believe that generosity can be demonstrated, taught and learned. Over the six years that the Greater Sabetha Community Foundation has existed, people in our community are learning what we do and why we exist. In fact, people are actually thinking of ways to help others through the foundation.

The newest fund listed on our website is the Sabetha Medical Expense Relief Fund, which was started from an idea of a young married couple. This couple called GSCF with an idea and their idea led them to hold a tennis tournament to raise the seed money to establish a fund that will assist people who are strapped with unexpected medical expenses. What a generous idea! During Give to Grow Challenge Week, this fund will be available for donations and matching dollars will be available to make donations grow. Please put November 26-30 on your calendar and plan your giving to this fund or many others so you can maximize your generosity.