



Sharon and Bert Robertson Team Up at Grasonville Elementary
by
Christine Grupenhoff

Working together as a team is nothing new for Bert and Sharon Robertson. Married for 40 years, the Robertson's are Character Coaches at Grasonville Elementary School. Coaching and teaching seem to be part of their nature. With Bert Robertson in sales for many years, his free time was devoted to coaching soccer. With other like-minded individuals, Bert Robertson was one of the original founders of the Kent Island Soccer League. Meanwhile, Sharon Robertson was a second grade teacher with Queen Anne's County Public Schools for 20 years. When they lost their 8-year-old son, Brian, in 1981 to a drunk driver, they focused on speaking and lobbying against drinking and driving and have continued for 26 years.

Sharon Robertson first learned about Character Counts! through the Community Partnerships for Children and Families as a board member. She coached at Grasonville Elementary School for four 1st grade classes. Because of a change in her schedule with work, Sharon Robertson temporarily needed to suspend her coaching at the school. Last year, the guidance counselor approached her to return since one coach was needed for the fourth grade class, her grandson's Michael's class. Describing how he became a coach, Bert Robertson explains, "Sharon knew about the program and was asked by the guidance counselor. We have been married for 40 years. I was approached by Sharon and could not resist her will."

Sharon Robertson usually takes the role of designing lesson plans while Bert Robertson considers himself the "prop" man carrying the necessary papers and other tools that are helpful in getting their message across to the students. One lesson that was especially appealing to them and the children centered around the pillar of respect when they decided to discuss table manners. The Robertson's had place settings complete with placemats for each child. They set each of their places and then demonstrated the correct way to set a table. They next instructed the children on the correct way to hold their utensils and discussed the importance of good table manners. Included in the lesson was reading the book, [A Spoon Is Not a Shovel](#). With his experience in sales, Bert Robertson explained to the children that job interviews sometimes happen over lunch or dinner. It is important that you make a good impression. He explained that it is not just what is on a resume that is important, but how you conduct yourself. Even if we do not use proper manners at all times at home, it is important to know these things when you need to put your best side forward. The Robertson's share, "The children really enjoyed it and we

were actually amazed about how seriously the entire class seemed to take this. Many of the 4th graders wanted to know more about being an ‘adult.’”

This year the Robertson’s are coaches in Mrs. Allison Torrence’s 1st grade class where they coach 16 children, one of them being their granddaughter, Samantha. Arriving at the school, the Robertson’s pick up their assigned badges, register in the volunteer logbook, and head to the classroom. Being with the students is truly a delight for them. Bert and Sharon Robertson share, “The children all seem to want to participate in the lessons. Most have established views about the Pillars of Character. The smiles when we arrive in class and the great goodbyes when you leave let us know that we are welcomed and appreciated. It is always a joy to have children recognize you in other settings and have them explain to their parents that we are their Character Coaches.”

Leslie Follum, current Guidance Counselor at Grasonville, is delighted to have the two coaching together and adds, “Right now we have 17 coaches at the school and we are so pleased to have the Team Robertson. The children really love having them in the classroom. The two plan their lessons and relate so well to the children. I am pleased they continue to coach each year at Grasonville.”

Bert Robertson is the first to note that he was a bit nervous about joining in as a character coach until he saw it in action. He would like to encourage others to give it a try. The Robertson’s share, “We both say that many things happen when you are involved with Character Counts. The children benefit from the reinforcement of the Pillars of Character. The children also benefit by seeing other adults in friendly situations. The coach benefits by seeing how great our children are. Everyone finishes the day feeling better about the children and themselves. It also shows just how much work a great teacher does to prepare for a full day of school. We also believe that it is important to have others in the lives of young people who will reinforce the Six Pillars of Character.”

Character Counts! wishes to thank Sharon and Bert Robertson. They are representative of people who strive to improve the lives of young people in Queen Anne’s County through dedication, commitment and action. To find out more about your opportunity to become a Character Counts coach, contact Jacki Carter at 410-758-6677 or email her at jcarter@qac.org.