

**Boomerang Character Education Report
Manitowoc County, State Fiscal Year 2004-05
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BOOMERANG started in two school districts in the 2004-05 school year, and in 2005-06 another school district got involved. Discussions are being initiated at the writing of this report to include two more school districts in the 2007-08 school year, thus involving five of the six school districts in Manitowoc County.

Trained high school students facilitate eight interactive lessons with fourth grade students at four elementary schools using the themes listed below. Persons involved in the *BOOMERANG* character education program in the 2006-2007 school year include: 27 high school students trained to be *BOOMERANG* Team Teachers, two retired school teachers who mentor the high school students, and five elementary school counselors who coordinate their classroom visits with the Boomerang lesson for the month.

Thirteen classroom teachers provide feedback and collect evaluation data for the team teachers, counselors, and for Faye and Kevin. Three hundred fourth grade students participate in the monthly character education session which takes one school period. All parents of fourth grade students receive a monthly family newsletter highlighting the character trait of the month. At the end of the year, fourth grade students, along with Faye and Kevin, present a boomerang to each graduating senior at their annual senior awards night program. The boomerang is signed by all fourth graders in the classroom where the high school students facilitated their lessons.

Accomplishments/Impacts

- *BOOMERANG* started with six classrooms in two elementary schools in 2004-05. In 2006-07, there are 13 classrooms in four elementary schools.
- In 2005-06, 17 high school students were trained *BOOMERANG* facilitators. In 2006-07, the number increased to 27. Only three high school students dropped out of the program since its initiation, two because of the family moving, and one because of work commitments.
- Team Teachers have encouraged the initiation of a teacher recommendation form to recruit high school students into the *BOOMERANG* program in their sophomore year.

- The team teachers most often identified the following **personal skill growth** categories during their tenure with the program:
 - “I am proud of my accomplishments.”
 - “I have learned to try something new.”
 - “I feel good about myself.”
- The team teachers identified the following **working with other people** skills as a result of their tenure with the program:
 - “I learned to listen to other people.”
 - “I learned how to lead others.”
 - “I feel comfortable speaking in front of a group.”
- 86% of the parents indicated reading the family newsletter either always or sometimes each month
- 88% of the parents stated the newsletters were either somewhat useful or useful with one comment indicating the newsletters were saved for future reference.
- 84% of the parents indicated they talked about the *BOOMERANG* session either sometimes or always
- 96% of parents indicated talking about being a person of good character in school is a good idea.
- In 2005-06, 96% of the 4th grade students indicated they thought the program helped them to be a more caring person

The following is a testimonial by a fourth grade teacher. She requested of the elementary guidance counselor to address the perception of getting involved in the holiday concert. The guidance counselor asked the Boomerang Team Teachers to address the topic.

Request:

“The other day, during noon recess, a student reported that the fourth grade boys were not interested in trying out for parts in the holiday concert because they think music is gay. I think we need to address this in the classroom and in guidance classes. I would appreciate some help with this issue. Thank you.”

Response:

“The High School Boomerang students in my class did a SUPERB job telling the kids that singing and dancing don't make guys any less manly. They used great examples including local students and famous people. I thought they spent just the right amount of time on it, so that it wasn't overkill. Hats off to them! I hope it will make the boys rethink who participates in music.”

Presentations by Faye and Kevin were given at the 2006 Joint Council of Extension Professionals annual conference, and again at a UW-Extension Eastern District meeting in 2006.