

Family traumatized by 'dispicable actions'

Cowardly letter sent to wrong family

An open message to the letter writer who mailed several letters to my family last week in the wake of the destruction and vandalism at Robert Little School:

In your self-righteous haste to take matters into your own hands, you didn't even bother to make sure you had your facts straight. Simply because our family name is "Wilkinson" and we live on the same street as one of the young men charged, you erroneously targeted a completely innocent family. What happened to us directly victimized our family, in our own house, and has marred the sanctity of our home. I'm nervous for the safety of my children inside and outside our home, and for any wilful damage caused by some vigilante taking matters into his/her own hands.

Our children, who are only six and four years old, were with me when I opened the letter, mistakenly believing it to be an invitation for the YMCA fundraiser. I could not catch my emotions quickly enough when I realized what the letter actually was, and my children could immediately sense that something was terribly wrong.

Let me take a moment to tell you about the Wilkinson family whom you have traumatized with your despicable actions.

We moved to Acton nearly two years ago after leaving our beloved Vancouver Island in order to be closer to Sick Kids Hospital and the excellent care they provide our six year-old son, Zachary. This summer Zachary had an 8 hour brain surgery at Sick Kids and has worked so hard to overcome all the hurdles he has so bravely faced.

Our only other child is our four year-old daughter Isabelle, who has adjusted well to life in Ontario and enjoys playing with all the new friends she has made.

My husband, a 20-plus year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, has sacrificed so much to serve his country and was there in Acton on Remembrance Day, in his uniform and with all his medals on.

We chose Acton because of the small-town feel and thought it was a good place to raise our young children. Thank you for robbing us of all that, just as we were starting to finally think of Acton as our home.

The Wilkinson family



Too soon for unconditional forgiveness

*To the editor,
Re "Chris and Andrew are a valuable part of our community too.."*

I agree with you that our community does not need to look for draconian revenge against two young men, but I think it might be a little early for unconditional forgiveness. I'm inclined to say that Chris and Andrew "could become" a valuable part of our community.

I agree that they need someone in their corner, but I hope that person also helps them to understand that this is not as simple as the destruction of material items. This senseless "mistake" had a strong effect on many small children.

I hope Chris and Andrew understand that they delivered a message that night - Hey kids, bad things can happen in your safe world. That message was not theirs to deliver.

Luckily, wonderful caring people like Bob Tadman and the wonderful staff at Robert Little have worked hard to restore the safe feeling that these children took for granted.

Chris and Andrew needed to hear the pained gasps of small children as they learned that their beloved fish were killed, and see the confusion and pain in the eyes of four, five and six year-old children who couldn't understand how or why this could happen in their school.

I honestly hope that Chris and Andrew have had a chance to reflect and that the aftermath of this has allowed them to see the effects of such a senseless act that was somehow "fun" to them at the time.

I'm not looking for the stocks, or public flogging. I simply hope that they completely regret their decisions and have discovered that if they put the same amount of time and energy into good things, they could do a lot of good. They are 19 years old. Old enough to vote in our leaders, old enough to fight for our country and old enough to face the consequences of their actions and decisions. That's what adults do.

Thank you, Janet Hoskin

Vandals should 'make good'

"Re: Vandalism Aftermath"

Our family once lived in Mississauga, but grew tired of the senseless vandalism and petty crime committed by the neighbourhood youth but more importantly the philosophy that it's never the child's fault for their own destructive actions. We heard wonderful things about Acton and quickly moved out. What a wonderful community with a strong sense of moral and family value.

Our bliss came to an end when two grown men, yes grown men, caused extensive damage to Robert Little school and then, a letter to the editor called them "good young men". Not many years ago when I was a child we were raised to respect other people. Had we thrown a baseball through a neighbour's window, four things would have happened. We would have apologized for our actions, cleaned up the mess, paid for the damage and finally taken our punishment. Our community has yet to see any apology or financial offering from these so called 'good men'.

A child spends half of their day in their classroom at school. As a result the classroom is like a home to some students and even a sanctuary for any child which has a broken or abusive home, not to mention the memories we all have of our first classrooms. It disgusts me that this precious sanctuary has been discounted by that letter. I'm sure that they would surely not want two men to break into their house in the middle of night to cause the same level of damage and then have someone say "but it's just stuff".

The letter assures us that these are "good men" and we should forgive a simple mistake. But how can we forgive someone who is not asking for forgiveness (by starting with an apology). But it was not a lapse of integrity for a split moment in time. These men must have spent a few hours of time within the school to cause that much damage. Did it not dawn on them during all that time that they should stop? In my opinion, these grown men should pay for all of the damage, dollar for dollar, and then complete community service for the accumulative hours of each volunteer, parent, child, teacher, custodian, etc. who cleaned up their mess. That would make it even, but what will they do beyond that to make good?

Jason Pavelich, Acton



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