

Rotary District 5520 4-Way Test Essay Contest 2009

1st Place Winner--Haley Dallas sponsored by the Rotary Club of Taos

The 4-Way Test for Students

"A child miseducated is a child lost." These are the words of former president, and probably most famous Rotarian member, John F. Kennedy. The Four-Way Test is a series of four simple questions that have been helping businesses, individuals, and community organizations since its inception in 1932. Most schools have many values that are parallel to those of the Rotary club, such as building community, and fairness to all. It is my belief that if they were to apply The Four-Way Test to the curriculum and overall day to day operations of the school it would result in a happier campus, emotionally healthier environment, and all around better students.

Is it the truth? This is the first question of the Four-Way Test. Truth and honesty is the base of any school. It is one of the many values that overflow from the classroom into the cafeteria and playground. When taking a test, or writing a report each student must ask themselves, is this true? Is the information accurate and reliable? Is it my original work? This also applies to outside of class. Gossip and rumors can be very hurtful, and middle school is a fantastic place for them to fester and grow. Students need to be careful of what they say and make sure it is the truth, before speaking about another student or teacher even.

Is it fair to all involved? Everyone has participated in group projects, and everyone has been in a group where one or two people did all the work and the other group members don't complete their share. A good way to fix this reoccurring problem is to apply the second question of the Four-Way Test, is it fair to all involved? This will insure that each group member is doing his or her fair portion of the work.

Will it build goodwill and better friendships? It is crucial that students and teachers have a trusting, and understanding relationship.. Students must feel safe asking questions and requesting help. If either the student or teacher is making decisions that do not promote goodwill and better friendship, the classroom will not be the safe haven that is necessary for learning to take place.

Is it beneficial to all concerned? This is the final and possibly most essential question asked. It can be applied to something as simple as, "Should I complete my homework assignment?" to, "Should P.E. be kept in schools?" If it is beneficial to everyone involved, it will help produce happier, healthier, and highly intellectual students.

Although simple, the Four-Way Test is a fast and affective way to make good decisions. It has been helping businesses and organizations flourish for many years, so why not our students? If applied in schools these four questions would help children make good choices and become better students.