

HUMAN VALUES FOUNDATION



Spring Newsletter



No. 35 - April 2014

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our President, Mrs June Auton, who died on Friday, 28 March after a long illness.

June was an absolutely remarkable person and has left a vast gift to humanity with her inspirational *Education in Human Values* (“EHV”) programme, positively touching the lives of countless children. Without her, there would be no Human Values Foundation.



Values Education – at the heart of June’s life

June taught for 16 years in a very deprived area, where violence, crime and drug abuse were the norm rather than the exception. During the early years of her teaching experience, she attended a course at the Froebel Institute in London, where she learnt about the benefits of using values in teaching. She took the concept back to her classroom and within a few weeks there was a marked improvement in the classroom atmosphere. Peace descended! Trust built up and a special transformational love began to flow. It helped enormously with her teaching skills and changed her life so much that she decided to compile a programme from the lesson plans she had written and piloted so successfully. With a dedicated team of friends she formed the Human Values Foundation charity in 1995 and began to introduce “Education in Human Values” in earnest to other schools.

To give you an inkling of just what a special person June was and why she was so adored by her pupils, here is an article we happened to tease out of her recently following our values-themed article for January based upon the six letters of VALUES.

JUNE'S "V-A-L-U-E-S" STORY - The development of "EHV" and "SEE"

V = VISION

My personal vision was one of optimism - to teach all subjects to a "top of the school" class of 10- to 12-year-olds and prepare them for their upcoming Secondary school stage. It was my first job as a *mature* teacher and my optimism grew as I responded to the waving children on that fine September morning as they entered their school, which was considered to be in a "deprived" area, in fact the second largest social housing estate in Europe.

What a shock was in store for me! *Their* vision of school life was very different. Incidents included: breaking others' pencils; being noisy; eating another child's packed lunch; being unkind, uncaring, disrespectful and unco-operative.

At the end of the day, I said, "Well, let's all stand and say, 'Good evening' to each other." They managed this but then there was a wild rush to the windows, which, in the past and unbeknown to me, had been used as a quick exit to home. It would not have caused me so much concern had our classroom been on the ground floor but we were on the first floor! Fortunately, the windows were opposite rising ground and the distance between the dangling feet and the ground could have been only about a metre. The windows were quickly shut, the children returned to their seats and no harm was done.

In spite of having trained for three years, I vowed I would not return the next day. However, my family persuaded me to give it at least a week.

If you had stood with me as I closed the classroom door on that first day and told me the time would come when I would shut that same door for the Christmas holidays and that I would cry and not want to leave the empty, beautifully decorated classroom, lovingly created by all the children and that I would miss their love, their caring, sharing, friendly and helpful behaviour, I would have laughed through my tears. However, it DID happen.

A = ATTITUDE

A few weeks after joining that class, I attended a human values curriculum course in London, where many teachers agreed that without good behaviour and

values in the classroom, no real learning could take place. We selected some common, core values and, armed with numerous ideas and notes, we eagerly returned to our schools.

I placed five core values of Truth, Love, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-Violence up on the wall - to the amusement of all the children. Their laughter rippled through the classroom and one boy responded by saying, "We know all about love." "But do we?" I asked and their questions and ideas began to flow, their attitudes began to change and little by little we talked about things that really mattered to each one and shared our feelings. We really practised the values. I also introduced silent sitting (reflection), a song and a story pertinent to the week's value. Two months later, there had been a remarkable change in attitudes. Unconditional love flowed, peace descended and good behaviour really was taken on board. The children loved coming to school, being kind and helpful.

L = LOVE

During our second week, we explored the value of Love. The class responded well and wanted to express their understanding of universal love. Not only did we all discuss this value but they went on to write down their feelings and one child wrote:

LOVE is caring and sharing and making new friends and helping each other. Love is being kind to nature and the environment. Love is looking after others and caring for parents, relatives and each other at school, also loving our pets and caring for the environment.

Another child wrote:

Values make your life better. The most important value to me is Love because my mum and dad love me. Who washes your clothes? Your mum and dad do and there are lots more things they do for you.

It soon became apparent that we needed some kind of structure and covering one core value per week was a little repetitive. Also during our discussions, we discovered that many other values linked in with the core values. For example, apart from the ones already listed above, we discovered that Love also embraced compassion and empathy, forgiveness, inner happiness, joy, patience, courage, sympathy, tolerance and many others. So they were considered to be "related values".

I began to write the lesson plans built on these related values. Each lesson contained a discussion on the week's related value, a song, a quotation, which went up throughout the school, a story, one or more activities and suggested actions for a follow-up session.

I well remember the half-term holiday looming and I asked the children in the class to bring in a thoughtful quotation linked in with Friendship to offer up on their return. They had a week to think about it. When we returned to school, I could tell that in the excitement of the holiday activities, for some had gone on family holidays, many had forgotten the task. So I suggested we had silent reflection and I played some gentle, soft music. A few minutes passed and a small hand was slowly raised. With his eyes still closed, Wayne said,

"Friendship, if used wisely over a long period of time, can form a bond of love."

How pleased I was and eagerly asked where he had found such a lovely quotation, to which he replied, *"I have only just thought of it. It flowed through my mind when I listened to the nice music."* We wasted no time in displaying his wonderful quotation.

U = UNDERSTANDING

The supreme act of a teacher is to awaken the creative expression in knowledge and understanding in children and themselves. Educators need to understand that if we merely stuff children with information in order to pass examinations, developing only the intellect, how can we possibly bring about true education? At present the new trend leans towards the idea that we teach children what to think and not how to think. Parents and teachers need to unite and come to a greater understanding that it is only when there is love and understanding that true education can flourish. The highest function of a teacher is to bring about an integrated individual, who is capable of dealing with all aspects of life and so we need to nurture all five aspects of the child:

Intellectual, Expansion (Heart), Emotional, Physical and Spiritual.

If we just concentrate on developing the intellect, there will be huge gaps in the children's development that are equally important. How do we feel when we hear a sad account of a student gaining many degrees in science, maths, literature and

history but terminating his life when he could not cope as the relationship between himself and his girlfriend showed signs of ending?

E = EDUCATION

How often have we come across this meaningful quotation?

"Education is what you have left when you have forgotten almost everything you have been taught."

Another comes to mind:

"At the end of education is character."

If we imagine education being delivered by someone such as a potter - one hand inside expands. This is love. The outside hand restricts. This is discipline, quality of delivery and material, which must be of the highest order.

S = SERVICE

Service is an expression and manifestation of our love for fellow beings. What a difference all these values made for us in our classroom. Not only did the course improve my teaching skills but the children's academic skills leapt ahead.

Another advantage was that of developing organisational skills. For example, the children would add their names to the **Today's Help List** if they needed assistance with an aspect of learning - something they were finding difficult. A 15-minutes session was set aside. The helper would have to have knowledge or 'know-how' about the subject and would sign up next to that request for help, such as in the following:

Help need for	Subject/topic	Helper
<i>Simon</i>	<i>Maths Division</i>	<i>Robert</i>
<i>Natalie</i>	<i>Comprehension</i>	<i>Hayley</i>

The most surprising request was this one:

<i>Wayne</i>	<i>Show me how to darn so that I can darn my football sock.</i>	<i>Lizzy</i>
--------------	---	--------------

This was service indeed because for 15 minutes I now had 18 teaching assistants. The children enjoyed helping and receiving help. They were careful to keep the balance of helpers and receivers and they very quickly learnt from each other.

The children also kept the school grounds and playing field litter-free, encouraging others to recycle. They formed three committees:

- (1) Social
- (2) Out- of-School Visits
- (3) Publicity and Helpers.

This was most helpful because they arranged their own visits. For example, if they decided they would like a tour of London, they sought permission; they would write a letter to parents explaining what the trip would entail; they telephoned the coach companies for estimates for hiring; they collected permission slips and money; and they saw to the payment of all the bills. This suggested trip was particularly exciting and fun because I added an element of surprise for all their hard work by obtaining permission to drive straight through the gates of Buckingham Palace to watch the Changing of the Guard and we were given a seating area. All three committees helped with other activities, such as parents' evenings, discos, outside speakers, etc.

One morning our Headteacher brought a large, rather overpowering boy into the class to join us. As he introduced Daniel I knew only too well that the local magistrate was giving him one more chance to change his attitude. When the Headteacher left the classroom, children invited him to sit with them. "That's amazing!" said Daniel, "Nobody has ever asked me to sit with them." He became a great asset to the school. I was in charge of the boys' sports and if I asked him to organise a football practice during the lunch time, I could rely on him to have everyone there on time and all equipment ready. With his tremendous help and energy, we won the inter-school trophies for football, cricket, rounders and hockey.

On my way into school one morning, I overheard two girls on the Social Committee talk of a disagreement their mothers had had in the local supermarket. I smiled as one child said, "Your mother and mine could do with a huge dose of EHV." (I called the programme that I was developing with my class EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES.) On another occasion I was met at the school gate by a sizable crowd concerned about a fight taking place. They gasped, "Mrs Auton, Mrs Auton, there's a fight near the swimming pool but don't

worry, no-one in our class is involved." At that point I realised that we had an 'in' and an 'out' group and if values-based education was to succeed, then the whole school should be involved.

When the time came for my first cohort to transfer to the local secondary school, there were mixed feelings indeed. I heard snippets from time to time as to their progress and one day a little crowd poked their heads around my door, greeted me and then all their news tumbled out. One thing did concern them and that was the lack of values teaching in their new school. In unison they exclaimed, "Mrs Auton, there's no EHV there; just nothing." Another added, "We asked for the course and even offered to teach the teachers how to do it. We do miss it. Perhaps we could help in some way?" What a difference in their attitudes compared with when we first met! Now they were confident, respectful, thoughtful, helpful and successful citizens.

Following my first class's concern about what they described as a "nightmare" because they felt that none of their new classmates knew anything about values, during the next few years I devised a programme for the first two years of secondary schooling and called it SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION (now known as "SEE"). As with EHV, it's designed to make learning fun, purposeful and challenging. It contains the same core and related values but extends the children and, just as EHV does, it brings out the very best in them.

THE WORK GOES ON

At the Annual General Meeting last November, we said farewell to our retiring Trustee, Kevin Bell, who has given many years of diligent service to the Foundation. We are most grateful to Kevin for his unstinting contributions, particularly his wisdom, experience and fundraising. We are delighted to welcome a new Trustee, Kashmira Deboo, whose training and background are in finance and education. Kashmira is also proving to be a great asset and has done some invaluable work in the past, particularly in contacting schools for feedback and providing the analysis of Government statistics that indicated over a 4-year period that compared to all schools in England, specifically in achieving Level 4 or above in both English and Maths, the academic performance of schools using Education in Human Values outperformed the national average by 25%.

PROGRESS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

We are delighted to report that since our last newsletter in November, another 36 schools have acquired copies of our *Education in Human Values* programme. With about 200 children in each of the schools, this means that around another 7,200 children, along with their teachers and family members, may now be starting to benefit from all the enjoyment and enrichment that flows from using this resource.

DONATIONS

Thank you so much to all of you, as subscribing Members and Friends of the Foundation and generous individuals and grant-making trustees, who are supporting what Michael Morpurgo, our Patron, described as our “remarkable and vital work”. We are especially grateful to the member of a family trust who has supported us for many years and given us a further donation and to Mrs Rita Jefferies, Mrs Audrey Nightingale-Young and the trustees of the Barlaycorn Trust, The Clarion Welsby Family Foundation and The Tony Metherell Charitable Trust, all of whom have recently given us funding that has enabled us to provide schools with a much appreciated copy of *Education in Human Values*. As one headteacher wrote recently, “*Thank-you so much for all the wonderful free resources - I assure you they will be put to good use :).*”

We would also like to express our enormous appreciation for very kind donations since our last newsletter from Terence Day, Bob and Mary Greenhead, Don and Mary Greenwood, Pam Jack, Tim Lipscomb, Adrian Price, Betty Rabjohn, Joan Sparrow, Polly Stone, Geoffrey and Ann Steinberg, Mike Roberts and Peter and Judy Woods. The kindness we have received is paying off in thousands of young lives being transformed by all the new and exciting things children are constantly learning from June Auton’s inspirational work.

AND FINALLY

From our hearts we THANK YOU for your part in supporting the Human Values Foundation and our endeavours towards the promotion and teaching of human values, an aspect of children’s education that is gaining ever wider recognition on account of the wide-ranging, positive changes that it sets in motion. If you have any comments or suggestions, do let us know about them by contacting:

Rosemary Dewan
Human Values Foundation
The Coach House, Salisbury Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0AJ
E: yes2values@hvf.org.uk * ☎ 01403 259711
The website is: www.humanvaluesfoundation.com

Have a glorious and enjoyable summer with very best wishes from all of us at the
Human Values Foundation.

