

## 'Including Samuel' Shows That Classrooms Can Be for All Students, Disabilities or Not

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ties in the classroom, as well as disability advocates including Keith Jones, an adult with cerebral palsy who remembers spending his first six years in school — during the 1970s in St. Louis — doing craft projects. "I don't care about paste and Popsicle sticks. I want math," said Jones, describing how he felt then. "You know, can I get some math? Something."

Inclusion requires a large commitment of time and training. Samuel's teachers and aides meet weekly to discuss how to adapt materials and lessons to make them work for him, sometimes at 6 a.m., Habib said. And doing it less than wholeheartedly can have a negative effect.

"Inclusion is an easy thing to do poorly," said Joe Petner, principal of the Haggerty School, a public school in Cambridge, Mass., which has committed to including all children with disabilities into the regular classroom throughout the day. "And when we do it poorly, we reinforce the beliefs that this cannot work."

When Habib started making the documentary, he thought of it as something that would be helpful for educational professionals to watch. But now that it is complete, he is finding a broader audience and sees its greatest benefit to people who have no experience with disability. Since the film was released in November, Habib has done inter-

views with NPR and *The Washington Post*, and screened the movie across the country. He is currently trying to find a place for the documentary to have a national broadcast, potentially on PBS.

There are people with disabilities in all walks of life, and integrating children with disabilities into the schools touches everyone — from other children and parents to school taxpayers. He hopes the film will help combat the idea that somehow people with disabilities are less smart or less worth knowing because they look and act differently.

After Samuel was born, he realized that he himself harbored those thoughts, and still fights against it

sometimes when he meets someone new, he said. "No one should be judged for having prejudice. But we can all evolve," he said. "I want to challenge people to make some of the same transitions I did."

"Including Samuel" will be shown at 7 p.m. on Feb. 12 at Colby-Sawyer College's Clements Hall. A discussion with Dan Habib will follow.

**Samuel Habib sits on the lap of his father, Dan Habib, behind the controls of his grandfather's sea plane as they prepare for a flight.**  
FROM INCLUDING SAMUEL



## Problem Isn't Focusing on Academics

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focused on making their patients healthy.

He'd rather we dwell on inspiring students, relationships, passion for learning, and individual growth and happiness.

I'm all for inspiration and passion; I try to relate to my students as individuals, and I hope they're happy. I pace and gesture and preach and make jokes. I answer their questions and I listen to them. I enjoy their company. But all that constitutes the means to the end for which my town put me in the classroom. I'm there to teach their children history, and how to read and write.

My colleague argues that teachers like me are stuck in an academic-achievement language rut, that my idea of scholastic success is defined too narrowly. He believes in the process of learning, rather than the end product. He wants students to enjoy learning and desire to become responsible citizens. For him a passion for learning is the number one thing you

can instill in your students. He urges teachers to resist the deluge of academic-achievement discourse and adopt more humane objectives.

If education is stuck in a language rut, it's filled with buzzwords like "process" and "learning to learn." Public schools' end product is supposed to be people who know things. Yes, with any luck they turn out to be decent human beings, and my part in that is to treat them decently and require that they're civil to each other. But a school that doesn't rank how much students learn as its top priority is like a hospital that's more concerned about whether its patients want to be healthy than whether they're actually getting better.

I want my students to become responsible citizens. I remind them repeatedly that I won't live forever, that one day they'll be running the country, and that when it's their turn, they won't be able to ask anybody how to do it. I yearn for them to desire to

assume the responsibility of self-government. But their desire won't be sufficient if they don't know enough history to do the job well.

When we study the Constitution, I impress on them that when the framers pledged to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity, they weren't just talking about themselves — that every generation, including my own and the one that sits in my eighth-grade class, bears that responsibility. Then we learn the nuts and bolts of how their government works. Inspiration, like appetite, makes us hungry, but it's not the meal.

Enjoying learning isn't the point, either. I'm glad when my students enjoy class, but no labor is ever enjoyable enough that you *always* want to do it. We need to teach kids that value and virtue aren't always about happiness or instant gratification. We need to instill perseverance, to teach them that life requires doing needful things even when they don't enjoy them. That's more important than orchestrating their education so that they're always having fun and feeling fulfilled.

A passion for learning is a fine thing. But take a look in the supermarket aisle, and you'll realize the thirst for knowledge doesn't rule most people's lives. English teachers want their students to fall in love with words, but most of us grow up to do the bulk of our reading in the newspaper.

Learning for most of us isn't a passion. It's a matter of acquiring a body of knowledge and skill that equips us to earn a living, teach our children, inherit the Republic, and sometimes glimpse life beyond the surface things.

I can't think of a purpose for schools more humane than that.

Peter Berger teaches English at Weathersfield Middle School. Poor Elijah would be pleased to answer letters addressed to him in care of the editor.

## Students Write Poems on Diverse Subjects

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in five papers in Vermont and New Hampshire.

For more, and to see the YWP's regular prompts, go to [youngwriterproject.org](http://youngwriterproject.org). This project is made possible through a grant by the Vermont Business Roundtable, a collection of the state's leaders of business and higher education who understand the importance of writing in school, work and life.

— Geoffrey Gevalt, YWP editor

### Winter Poem

BY SAMANTHA PERRAULT  
Lebanon High School, Grade 12

As the leaves turn  
And the trees become bare  
A burst of coldness appears around you  
As the days become shorter  
And the sun shines less and less  
A dark tinted shadow appears in the sky  
As the hint of color you worked so hard for slowly turns to white  
A saddened look appears on your face

You stay inside to keep warm  
Bundled up in blankets on the couch  
With a hot chocolate in hand  
Waiting...  
For the trees to become full,  
The days to become long,  
For the burst of sunlight to appear  
To gain back the color you once had  
And melt all the snow away

### Happiness

BY SALLY TUCKER  
Hartford High School, Grade 9

Happiness.  
It's being full without eating anything  
It's wanting to scream with a soar throat  
It's having energy to dance, sing, love  
When you should be sleeping, crying, dying

Happiness.

It's not knowing what you want, but knowing it's out there  
It's feeling beautiful, without seeing your reflection in the mirror

It's having enough and more to share, teach, give

It's seeing that all you want is to stay like this forever

Happiness.

It's standing at the foot of the ocean  
It's holding someone tight beside you

It's knowing how good life is and how much you'd loose without it

It's praying, leaping, crying, needing, loving

That feeling you get when you fill with energy or hope

That thing that makes you smile, laugh, sing

That passion and everlasting giddiness, that love

That part of your day you live for, the beauty

That's it.  
Happiness.

### The Box

BY ALLISON GETZ  
Oxbow High School, Grade 10

The box is where I keep my heart  
The box is where my heart must stay

The box is where no one will find it and throw it all away

The box is where I keep my secrets

The box is where I store my stuff

The box is where I dream so quietly when everything is rough

The box is where my thoughts are hiding

The box is where our memories stay  
The box is where no one will find us, and that's just okay

### Winter

BY BRIGITTE CARRIER-AUGER  
Oxbow High School, Grade 8

Some think of winter as death,

when things die,

when things end.

I do not.

I think of it as a new beginning.

When everything goes white as chalk,

blank,

empty,

so we can start over,

forget all we've done wrong,

with a clean slate.

All make horrible mistakes throughout the year.

And all want to forget.

Snow will make them go away.

All worries will be neglected,

back against the wall

everywhere it grasps you tight

that feeling that you are so small

and so vulnerable

well, that feeling holds you strong

back against the wall

you give in

break down

just then the feeling swallows you whole

you are stuck deep inside the belly

of this nasty creature

you want so badly to just weep out all of your feelings

hoping desperately that the mad animal will hear your cries,

show the tiniest sliver of sympathy,

and let you out of its horrible grasp

but the more you struggle the louder you cry

the tighter it holds

smothering every thought, every dream

dismissed into the white of snow.  
So we can forgive and forget about all our mistakes.

### Ode to Hugs

BY SIERRA HUTT

Woodstock Union High School,  
Grade 10

This an ode  
to loving hugs  
keeping us going,  
letting us know,  
silently speaking,  
that we are loved  
Hugs are warm and engulfing  
a simple way to say  
"I love you"

Thoughts go missing  
for those few moments  
when an embracing hug  
is on your mind  
Just like a crackling fire  
warming up cold hands  
or a cup of hot cocoa  
running throughout your body,  
Giving you the feeling  
of a warm belly

A hug is a sweet sensation  
swirling through  
it keeps you feeling warm  
even after arms are dropped  
A hug could be a memory  
tucked away behind the rest  
Just a small gesture,  
it's often overlooked  
but a tree couldn't grow  
without a small, insignificant seed  
and what would a laugh wouldn't be  
without a smile?

Love couldn't be true  
without an underestimated hug  
That speaks the words left unspoken

### Loaf of Bread

BY JUSTINAH DUHAIME

Hartford High School, Grade 12

my fingertips  
slowly stroke  
the surface of your wavy slices  
rising and falling amid stippled  
complexions of green and white  
mold

each puffy cluster arrayed like  
starlight

echoing their brilliance down the  
crisp ocean of your crust

### Back Against the Wall

BY BRIANA SPANGLER

Hartford Memorial Middle School,  
Grade 8

back against the wall  
the rage, the anger  
everywhere it grasps you tight  
that feeling that you are so small

and so vulnerable

well, that feeling holds you strong

back against the wall

you give in

break down

just then the feeling swallows you whole

you are stuck deep inside the belly

of this nasty creature

you want so badly to just weep out all of your feelings

hoping desperately that the mad animal will hear your cries,

show the tiniest sliver of sympathy,

and let you out of its horrible grasp

but the more you struggle the louder you cry

the tighter it holds

smothering every thought, every dream

## Valentine Love Lines



Put into words how much your loved ones mean to you by placing a personalized message this Valentine's Day!

Your message will appear in the February 14 issue of the Valley News on our Valentine's Day page.

Just fill out the form below and send to:

HEARTS, c/o Valley News

P.O. Box 877, White River Jet, VT 05001

or call us at 603-298-6082 for more information.

The cost is only \$2.00 per line.

All messages must be prepaid and received at the Valley News office no later than 4:30 pm on Monday, February 11.

NOTE: Minimum 3 lines (no last names in message). Allow 1 letter or punctuation mark per box and 1 space between words.

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TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAY TIME TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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Deadline for publication is 4:30 pm on Monday, February 11.



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