

**THE COMMUNITY OF CARING PROGRAM IN HOLY CROSS  
SCHOOL: IMPLEMENTATION, OUTCOMES AND STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS**

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## Dedication

This document is dedicated to my wonderful wife Heather for her love and support at all the times when I needed it; and also to our three beautiful children: Julia, Rebecca and Daniel.

## Abstract

This study measures the impact of the Community of Caring Program implemented at Holy Cross School in Calgary, Alberta, during the 1999/2000 school year. Impact was assessed by comparing records on the number of reported violent incidents, the truancy rate, student grade point averages, and the number of reported nonviolent discipline incidents at the end of the 1998/1999 school year and the end of the 1999/2000 school year.

The study also investigates whether, and to what degree 224 students in grades 7, 8, and 9 perceived an increase in staff and student behaviors which facilitate a positive school climate. These behaviors include mutual respect, courtesy, academic pursuit, safety, accountability, cooperation, communication, sense of community, meeting the needs of the students, and acknowledgment of effort over the course of the school year. Students were asked to complete a survey twice during the 1999/2000 school year; once in February and again near the end of the school term in June. The data collection tool is a five point Likert-type scale. Results indicate that while the number of discipline referrals was significantly decreased, all measures of student perceptions of others behaviors indicated either a lack of improvement or an increase in negative behaviors.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank to my parents Madeleine and Normand St. Louis for modeling a good work ethic for me to emulate. I would also like to express appreciation to Joe and Kay Hudson for all of their help and support, without it I would never have finished this project.

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## Chapter I: Introduction and Background to the Study

### The Setting

The researcher is employed as a Guidance Counsellor at Holy Cross School, a high needs school serving kindergarten through grade nine in the Dover/ Forest Lawn area of Calgary, Alberta. The school has a staff of 70, a student population of approximately 420, and thirty-two ethnic groups are represented in the student population. Some major challenges for teachers are the wide range of skills and abilities represented by students within the classrooms, students' lower than average scores on intelligence tests, and schoolwork not always being a priority of either students or their families.

Holy Cross School has a variety of special programs in place to meet the needs of students. These include the Developmentally Delayed (DD1) Program for students with an intelligence quotient under 75. This program teaches basic academics, with a rich mix of life and social skills. There is also the Integrated Occupation Program (IOP) to support youth who are a bit lower than average academically and have a large discrepancy between their verbal and non verbal intelligence test scores. Target students for this program have not had much success in academic courses, but are successful in vocational areas such as wood working, cooking, and welding. This program also has a business component, including a working business at the school and job placement during the last half of the year for grade nine students. Junior High Corrective Learning is another special program supporting students typically in the 80 – 90 IQ range who require extra support with literacy skills. Another program is the Resource Room which targets students of average intelligence who are at least two grades behind in either Math or

English. Finally, there is the Choices Program, which is essentially a junior high behavior adaptation room. The target population of the Choices Program are code 42 youth, as designated by Alberta Learning, who are classified as having severe behavioral/emotional problems. To qualify for this program students must have at least two clinical diagnoses on the DSM IV.

The above variety of programs reflects the commitment of Holy Cross School to help its students. Flexibility exists between the different streams of classes so that students in the Integrated Occupational Program, for example, might take a math class in the Developmentally Delayed Program. The ultimate goal of these special programs is reinstatement of students in mainstream classes. While Holy Cross School is not a typical school, students are rarely heard teasing each other about being in “special programs”. At least in part this is probably due to the fact that over one third of the student body is enrolled in special programs.

### Seeking Improvement

In spite of the above noted sound programs, the administration team at Holy Cross School shared concerns about the culture of the school and had been searching for a program to help achieve the following goals:

1. Reduce the reported number of violent incidents in school;
2. Reduce the truancy rate;
3. Increase student academic achievements;
4. Lower the number of non-violent discipline incidents;
5. Increase the extent to which students feel involved and respected as members of the school community.

While it was felt that Holy Cross School had made significant gains on these indicators over the last few years, there was a continuing desire to make further progress. In this respect, Holy Cross School is not alone. Currently, there is a tremendous focus on the above issues by educators across Canada and the United States. Violence has steadily increased in school communities and has been associated with poor socialization, poor school performance, maltreatment, and alienation (Cole, 1995; Offord & Lipman, 1996; Canadian Council on Social Development, 1997,). According to Buckner and Flanary; “School leaders are responsible for creating a safe educational environment in which learning thrives” (1996, p.45). The Justice Institute of British Columbia felt the best way to address this need is through character education programs; “Safe schools are ones where values become an integral part of the curriculum” (1997). Olweus also recognized the value of a well executed intervention when he stated, “With a suitable intervention program, it is possible to dramatically reduce bully/victim problems in schools” (1996, p.18).

“Over the years we [Canadian educators] have smugly stated that violence in schools was a problem ‘Only in the United States.’ No longer. Canadian schools have seen a marked increase in violence. During the past year newspapers and magazines have reported alarming and sensational stories of school violence in major cities across Canada” ( McConaghy, 1994, p.654). School culture is also squarely in the public’s eye “An overwhelming majority of [Canadian] adults (93%) responding to a poll conducted in April 1993 by Environics Research say that violence against staff and students in elementary schools is a major concern. The respondents considered it a greater concern than academic standards” (McConaghy,1994, p.656).

Canadian educators are addressing these concerns. The S.A.V.E. ( Systems Approach to a Violence Free Education) program merited investigation as it was developed in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia. S.A.V.E. is a progressive intervention focused on arming students with skills they can utilize to avoid problematic situations and maximize their potential as individuals.

The Systems Approach to a Violence Free Education is a realistic, school-based program that is developed around a number of policies, programs and committees. It involves the three major systems significant in a young person's life – family, school and the community. The program was developed to meet a number of objectives: to develop effective links with family, school and community services; to facilitate workshops and information sharing sessions for family, school and the community; to explore and implement educational policies, programs and approaches that support the development of a violence-free environment; to promote peace-keeping and pro-social skills by developing a comprehensive curriculum titled "Lessons in Living". The curriculum facilitates children's social and emotional growth while minimizing or eliminating potential problems they might experience: to develop positive play skills that allow students to play for enjoyment without aggression and violence. The implementation of a developmentally appropriate physical education program is critical to the development of these skills; to provide a range of counseling support services facilitated by services, professionals and paraprofessionals. These include preventative (self esteem groups, pro- social skill development) and remediation (anger management group); to develop an array of positive alternative programs; to initiate school- based teams to facilitate problem-solving and communication (Grantham, 1997, p.34).

In Alberta a special initiative called "Safe and Caring Schools" has been developed. This initiative, promoted by the Alberta Teacher's Association, is being implemented in an effort to make Alberta's schools have more safe and caring climates. Larry Booi, current president of the Alberta Teacher's Association, also referred to this program as being part of the solution to school violence: "If we work together, in conscious and committed ways, we can foster the growth of schools and communities that are safer, more caring, and better meet the needs of our students and our society" (Booi, Nov. 23, 1999, *The ATA News*). The Safe and Caring Schools phase two program

is called “Toward a Safe and Caring Community”. This program “promotes non-violent attitudes in youth and adults by teaching and reinforcing positive social skills through workshops and leadership training programs. The program also provides manuals and booklets on anger management, self esteem and preventing prejudice” (*The ATA News*, Dec. 7, 1999). When Federal Minister of Justice Anne MacLellan’s allocated \$700,000 to a series of crime prevention initiatives in Alberta, it was reported in *The ATA News* that:

She singled out the ATA’s Toward a Safe and Caring Community program as fostering leadership for, and among, young people. She praised the program for going beyond just creating safe and caring school environments to creating safe and caring homes and communities. And today, more than ever, children and youth need strong role models to guide them in caring for themselves and others (*The ATA News*, Dec. 7, 1999).

While investigating character education information some excellent websites were discovered: *Moral and Character Development* , by Bill Huitt, a professor at Valdosta State University ( <http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/~whuitt/index.html> ) (1998), *Assessing Character Education: Paradigms, Problems and Potentials* (<http://www.quest.edu/wnarticles2.htm>) by Thomas, (1998), as well the *Community Service Program* (<http://www2.ari.net/commcare/cocls/resourc.htm>). These websites also provide links for further investigation. A final site worth mentioning is that of the *National Character Education Resource Page* (<http://www.charactereducationinfo.org/>).

As the Guidance Counsellor at Holy Cross School this researcher is intimately aware of the many challenges faced by students and staff. While Holy Cross School has an excellent staff of hard working teachers, many feel overworked. Therefore, any new intervention selected had to be one that coincided with work that staff could reasonably incorporate into their normal routines.

While reviewing different character education programs, contacts were made with other schools in the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District. Ultimately, contact was made with Ms. Margie Ronca, Director of the Religious Education Program at the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District. On the basis of a series of discussions with Ms. Ronca, it was agreed that Holy Cross School would apply the Community of Caring program in the 1999-2000 school year. Ms. Ronca noted that training sessions were planned, along with \$1,000.00 seed money for participating schools.

Three teachers from Holy Cross School were sent to a two-day *Train the Trainers* session for the Community of Caring Program. These teachers were the religion teacher and the Guidance Counsellor (the writer) from the junior high area along with one of the mentoring teachers from the elementary area. The workshop exposed participants to key elements of the Community of Caring Program, along with examples of its implementation in American inner city schools. There are some results from these schools posted on the World Wide Web. In this researchers' opinion they should be viewed skeptically, as there is not enough information given about them in order to be confident of their reliability. However, as posted at the Community of Caring Incorporated's home website, here are some results schools have achieved:

“Students in three Community of Caring schools raised their grade point averages by 43%, 46%, and 71% respectively. Community of Caring schools report reduced pregnancies. One Community of Caring school reported reduced pregnancies from 14 to 2 over a two-year period. Community of Caring students show greater gains in knowledge about the adverse consequences and the risks of early sexual activity. Community of Caring "high risk" students were significantly more likely to plan postponing sex until after high school. One Community of Caring school showed a change from 0% to 24%. Community of Caring students had fewer unexcused absences, and in general fewer written disciplinary actions” (<http://communityofcaring.org/results.htm>, ).

## The Community of Caring Program

The Community of Caring Program is built around five core values aimed at empowering young people to be responsible, caring members of a community. The Program was founded as a project by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation in Washington, D.C. and at its core are five key values—caring, respect, trust, responsibility and family. These are defined as follows:

- Caring; caring is the opposite of both indifference and hate. Without caring, nothing matters.
- Responsibility; responsibility must be accepted by people who care. This means they are accountable for their actions, enjoying praise when things go well and willing to accept blame when things go wrong.
- Respect; respect is something that grows when others observe me taking responsibility for myself. I can also respect others who stand up for what is right.
- Trust; trust takes root and grows when people care for and respect each other. When I trust you I acknowledge that I need you for something, often support.
- Values; values are something we begin to learn in our families as well as the people we live with. Later our choices about love and sex create new families. We understand family is the community that raises children, the community they leave when they attend school, and the kind of community they may create themselves one day. (<http://CommunityofCaring.org>)

The Program is an interactive process of questions, reactions and discoveries woven into the curriculum. Through discussion and exploration students begin to understand the relationship between values, discussions and actions. The aim is to create a caring and respectful school environment. Key program components designed for implementation at Holy Cross School included:

- Teacher training: Staff responsible for carrying out the program must be provided with information about program purpose and the nature and place of values in education and everyday life;

- **Values discussion:** By discussing values, students are helped to understand the relationship between values, decisions and actions. These discussions are to be held on a regular basis during the school week;
- **Student forums:** Special activities are planned, implemented and led by students and teachers. Students and teachers come together and discuss issues of concern, with attention given to student solutions for the identified concerns. As with the other program elements the five core values are brought to bear on real life situations;
- **Visual displays:** Core values are displayed in a visual manner throughout the school to remind students what the current focus value is and encourage them to act in accordance with it;
- **Family involvement:** Family members are encouraged to actively participate with students and school staff in planning and conducting the Community of Caring Program. The aim is to bring families into the school community, and in this way extend the educational process into the families themselves.

## Chapter II: Program Purpose and Aims of the Research

The aim of this study then followed from the program purpose -- to determine if the Community of Caring Program as applied at Holy Cross School made a significant change in school climate. This has important implications for other schools, both in terms of the potential for affecting school social climates, as well as helping schools better connect to their larger communities. Community is a major focus of the Community of Caring Program, and increasingly, school safety and the manner and extent to which school environments contribute to students feeling segregated and isolated are becoming community concerns (Cole, 1999).

### School Context and Program Implementation

The 1999-2000 academic year was a challenging one at Holy Cross School. At the beginning of the school year there was a threat of a teacher strike, followed by a one day board driven teacher lock-out. The politics inevitably accompanying such a conflict were extremely hard on staff. Staff members commented that mid-September felt like the middle of the school year.

Another challenge involved the school Principal, who was awarded principalship of the new Bishop O'Byrne High School to be opened in September, 2001. This new posting meant that he would be away from Holy Cross School half time. This news caused considerable anxiety among staff.

Another large change involved the position of vice-principal. The previous incumbent had received a principalship at a different school and a replacement was needed for Holy Cross School. There were no applicants from the vice-principal pool, so

one was assigned to Holy Cross. The new Vice-Principal made a few visits to the school, and then withdrew from the assignment. Once again the position was posted and this time a person applied and was promptly awarded the position. When the Human Resources department realized that this person had only four years of teaching experience, they reconsidered their decision to send an inexperienced vice-principal to the school in light of the fact that the principal was to be available only half time. This led to the third vice-principal candidate in three weeks. This person took up his duties and within a few weeks was admitted to hospital for back surgery. He subsequently missed nearly two weeks, both before and after the strike. This meant that when his presence and support were most needed, he was not available.

Finally, if threats of a strike, the decrease of the Principal's time and presence in the school, and the vacant vice-principal position were not enough, the school board locked out the teachers rather than continue contract negotiations. The lockout was tremendously disillusioning for all members of the school community. Teachers and students were devastated by the lockout. The board was seen as valuing money more than education and an "us versus them" mentality began to grow.

These challenges only served to further spur this writer's interest in finding ways to further empower students to take greater ownership of the school, their behaviors and education. Much of the promising character education literature reviewed, including three excellent models applied in The Child Development Project, The Hyde School and the City Montessori School program as discussed in the web site *Moral and Character Education* by Huitt (<http://www.valdosta.peachnet.edu/~whuitt/index.html>), seemed to keep presenting the same point. If there is a good relationship between the child and

community, including family, school and the general neighborhood, then that child is more likely to be successful. In other words, if children are made to feel like valued and respected members of a community, then they are more likely to engage with the community in a positive and meaningful manner.

Given their interest in the Community of Caring Program, an initial concern of the administration team was getting enough staff support. To address this, a major portion of a staff meeting held before the beginning of the school year was devoted to the Community of Caring Program. The staff then watched “Five Words that can Change Your Life” (1996), a short informative video produced by the Community of Caring Incorporation. Following the viewing a discussion took place about the benefits of applying the program at Holy Cross School. The staff expressed strong support and a steering committee was organized.

The steering committee represented a cross section of teachers in different grades along with the three teachers who had attended the initial training session. The committee’s role was one of supporting and coordinating the implementation of the Community of Caring Program at Holy Cross School. One of the first tasks undertaken was to draw up a one-year plan. While the committee tried to get community members to join, these efforts met with little success. No one from the community was successfully recruited to sit on the steering committee.

The one-year implementation plan prepared by the steering committee included the following major components:

- Value discussions to be held for 53 minutes every sixth day in the home room period. The goal here being to create awareness of the program, and to get all teachers and students "speaking the same language";
- A minimum of two student forums during the school year. The primary purpose was to ensure that the students realized that they had an important role in the Community of Caring Program, and for them to feel empowered;
- Family involvement, aimed at giving parents more opportunities to involve them in positively shaping their children's learning community. This was seen as potentially involving parents participating on the steering committee, helping organize student forums, and soliciting other community members to become involved in the program.
- Community service. As students begin to feel more valued by the community, the expectation is they will begin to take more pride in their community and want to engage more actively and positively with it. The challenge here was to think of creative activities the students could undertake. Examples may include volunteering at a senior citizens lodge, helping with community clean up initiatives or helping a younger student get safely to and from school.

### Supporting the Program

To maintain support for the program, and keep its focus, a number of special events were carried out during the school year. In September, the steering committee decided that each of the five values would be the focus of classroom discussions for two months. In this way, the five core values would be covered over the ten-month school year. Lesson plans, along with supplementary resources, were provided to homeroom

teachers to ensure that the entire school community was getting the same information on a timely basis. Visuals were prepared and displayed throughout the school to remind students about the specific value being focused upon at that time. Teachers were reminded to discuss the program values as much as possible with their students in order to enhance saliency and potential effects.

In December, a poster contest was held. Students were asked to depict the value that they believed they would most benefit from further developing. All winners were publicly recognized at a school awards ceremony and rewarded with a pizza party.

While the steering committee had a goal of holding two school forums during the year, only one was held in March. It was well received and worth the large investment of time to plan and carry out. The forum focused on respect, one of the five core values in the Community of Caring Program. The Spring forum was called COC<sup>2</sup> as it was a hybrid of the locally developed Code of Conduct and the Community of Caring Program. Five main events were organized for the afternoon, and all students engaged actively in them.

At the student forum the entire junior high school was seated in the gym for a brief introduction and overview of the forum, along with a definition of the word respect, and how it can be demonstrated. The first event of the forum was a play on the topic of “Sexual Harassment”, written by the grade eight students in conjunction with the Calgary Committee Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA). Following the twenty-minute play, there was a student led discussion on how sexual abuse is symptomatic of a fundamental lack of respect. A small discussion then took place on the Violence Continuum; a model that CCASA presents in classrooms as part of its public education program. This model involves a four-step process that starts with an examination of such thoughts as

homophobia, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and sexism. This led into a presentation by Officer Beck, the School Liaison City of Calgary Police Officer, about how school violence was a symptom of persons being treated with less respect and dignity than they deserve. Violence is often the tip of the iceberg and disrespect is what is below the surface. Some examples of disrespect were given; pushing in the hallways, destroying property, and making abusive comments about other people. Students were helped to make the connection between disrespect leading to violence. Once students had been exposed to this information, a fifteen-minute debriefing session was held.

While a PowerPoint presentation had been planned to outline the Community of Caring Program for the junior high students, technical difficulties with the computer necessitated a change in plans. Students were asked to return to their homerooms with their homeroom teachers and complete three tasks. First, they were asked to identify what they saw as major school problems. Next students were asked to make some recommendations to resolve the identified problems and to develop a student action plan with at least one volunteer from each class willing to meet with the administration to discuss implementing the suggested solutions and carry out the plans. The third and final activity coming out of the forum ran for two months, as this involved an art project. Homeroom classes made tri-folds on the theme of respect. The object was to make a tri-fold that communicated the theme of respect or, more specifically, what respect meant to that particular homeroom. The tri-folds were judged on four criteria: originality and creativity, general aesthetic appeal, quality of the accompanying write up, and how well the tri -fold represented the theme of respect. This project was very successful and did more to get the junior high students talking about the Community of Caring Program than

any other event during the year. The initial idea was to select one winner from the entire junior high. However, the quality of the work was so high that it was decided to give prizes to the best tri -fold in each grade.

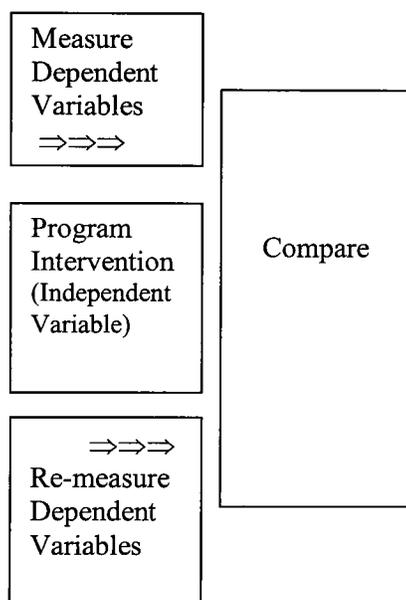
The final special event took place in May, involving a community dance and hot dog supper for students, their families, and school staff. The focus on the Community of Caring Program was subtle. While an effort had been made at the beginning of the year to solicit families to participate on the steering committee, little success was demonstrated. The community dance was seen as another attempt to draw parent support and involvement in the program. The dance was a great success, with enthusiastic participation by students, their families and staff. In their assessment following the dance, the steering committee decided it would have been better to have held the dance at the beginning of the year, and in this way enticed some parents into joining the steering committee.

## Chapter III: Methodology

### Study Design

The design for this study consists of a measurement of specified dependent variables, which then provide a basis of comparison for post program implementation (Babbie, 1992). Figure 1 illustrates this design:

Figure 1: Pretest- Posttest design:



The independent variable for the study was the Community of Caring initiative as carried out at Holy Cross School during the ten month academic year from September, 1999 through June, 2000. This program and its implementation were described in earlier sections of this paper. Data were collected on the following dependent variables:

1. Number of reported violent incidents occurring in the school;
2. School truancy rate;
3. Student grade point averages;
4. Number of non-violent discipline incidents reported at the school.

The data source for these dependent variables were administrative records retained in the school administrative office.

Data were collected on each of these quantitative indicators at the end of the school year before the Community of Caring Program was introduced and the end of the school year of implementation. Comparing the before and after data on each indicator provides a basis for inferring that the program, as the independent variable, was plausibly the cause of any differences found between the two measurement points.

In addition to the quantitative data collected on a before-after basis, survey data were collected at two points during program implementation. In February, and again in June 2000, students were administered a thirty-item questionnaire asking a series of questions about their perceptions of school climate. Students were asked to respond to a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from “*Almost Always*” to “*Almost Never*” (See Appendix C). This approach to measurement amounts to using a survey to supplement the before – after data collection to lend further credence to inferring that any potential change in schooling outcomes are indeed associated with the implementation of the Community of Caring Program.

#### Student Survey Sample Collection

While quantitative data on the four dependent variables were collected on the total 1998-1999 Holy Cross School population (N=236), as well as the total 1999-2000 student population (N=224), administering the survey of students’ perceptions proved to be more complicated, involving several steps. First, in February 2000, the questionnaire was administered to two hundred and twenty-four students in all eleven junior high homeroom classes. Of the two hundred and twenty-four students completing the

questionnaire, signed parent permission forms allowing the data to be used for this study were received for only seventy-five students. Those questionnaires completed by students for whom a signed parental permission form had not been received were removed from the sample. The final step involved removing from the sample six questionnaires completed by students in February, but not in June. This left a final sample of sixty -nine useable questionnaires completed in both February and June 2000.

### Student Survey Data Analysis

The analysis of the student survey results involved several steps. First the questionnaire items were grouped into two categories. The first category, “students’ perceptions of other students,” was subdivided into the following groupings:

- Students improving the learning environment---items numbered five, eight, fifteen;
- Students acting in a respectful manner---items numbered one, two, three, nine, ten;
- Students taking responsibility for themselves---items numbered six, seven, eleven, twelve.

Items making up the second category relate to “students’ views of teachers”, are subdivided into the following groupings:

- Encouraging students---items numbered eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty –two, twenty-five, twenty-six;
- Communicating with stakeholders---items numbered seventeen, twenty-three;
- Improving the learning environment---items numbered sixteen, twenty- four, twenty- nine, thirty;

- Respect for students---items numbered twenty-seven, twenty-eight.

A second step involved combining the extreme responses and, for purposes of simplicity of reporting, eliminating the middle choice. For example, the “Almost Never” and “Rarely” responses were grouped and reported as “Rarely”. All responses in the “Often” category were ignored. “Very Often” and “Almost Always” responses were collapsed as “Often”. The analysis of the data was straightforward, reported on frequency tabulations and percentages.

The third step involves the unusual procedure of combining responses in each grouping within each category. For example, the first category is “students’ perceptions of other students”. The first grouping of questions within that category is under the heading “students taking responsibility for themselves”, which includes questions six, seven, eleven and twelve. The responses to these four questions are added in the presentation of results. While combining responses in this manner eliminates the possibility of discerning the differences between responses to the individual four questions, it gives a clear sense of the overall perceptions of students within each grouping of questions. Recognizing that this procedure is not a dependable statistical procedure, it nevertheless facilitates the purpose of this student questionnaire as outlined on pages 18 and 19 of this project.

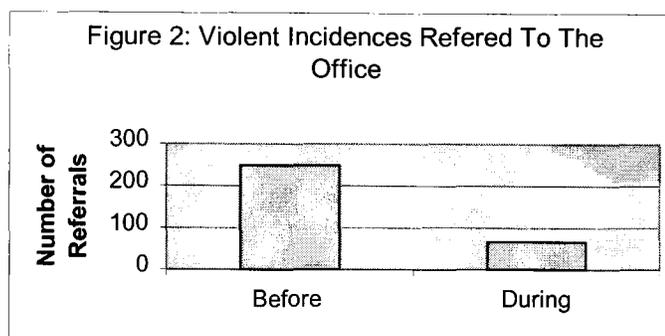
Finally, questions 4, "Interfering with other students" learning";13, "Engaging in verbal bullying behavior toward other students"; and 14, "Engaging in physical bullying behavior toward other students" were inverted to give the internal validity more credence. If the students failed to notice that the questions were inverted and their answers were at odds with their other answers on the test, this would indicate that the students were not

focusing while answering their questions. This simple indicator can influence the researcher's confidence in the testing results if a definite pattern presents itself. In this situation roughly one third of the students appeared to contradict themselves on at least one of the three questions. Although it was a good idea to include the inverted questions, little extra information was gleaned from including them in this example.

## Chapter IV: Results

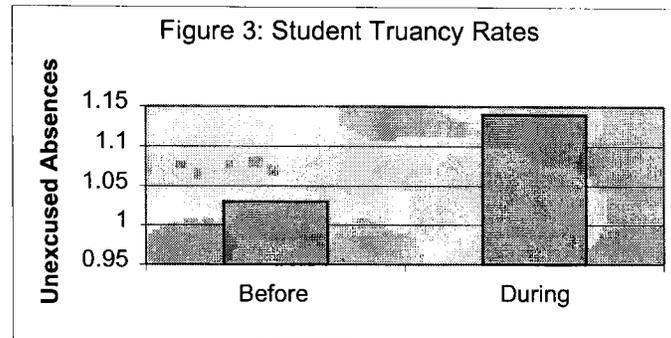
### Dependent Variables

Figure 2 presents data on the first dependent variable, incidence of violent school offences reported during the 1998-1999 school year, before program implementation, as well as during the 1999-2000 school year when the program was carried out:



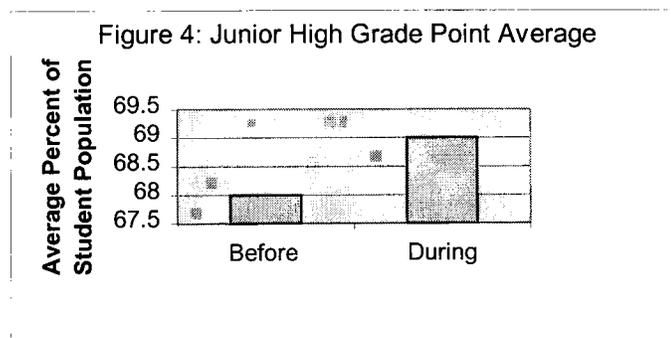
As shown in Figure 2, significant change was found in the number of reported violent school incidents over the two academic years. Two hundred and forty-eight violent incidents were reported at Holy Cross School during the 1998-1999 school year, while during the 1999-2000 year when the Community of Caring Program was implemented, the number decreased to sixty-seven. This represents a reduction of approximately seventy-three percent over the two-year period.

Figure 3 presents data on the reported rates of student absences during the 1998-1999 school year, before program implementation, as well as during the 1999-2000 school year, when the program was being carried out. These rates were calculated by counting the number of days student absences were unexcused by their parents and dividing this number by the number of students, as well as the number of school days.



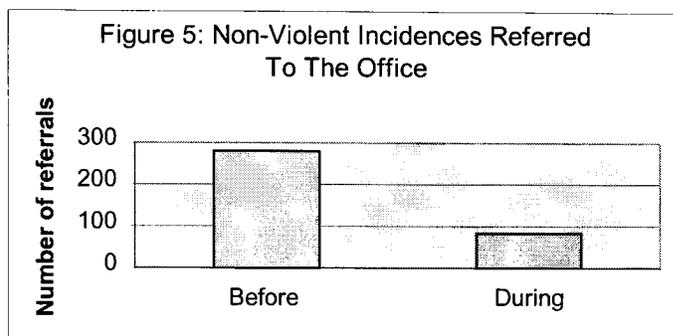
As evident from inspection of Figure 3, unexcused student absences increased slightly during program implementation in the 1999-2000 school year. During the 1998-1999 year, the school truancy rate was 1.03 and during the 1999-2000 year increased to approximately 1.14. This is an increase of approximately 10% during the program year as compared to the year before.

Figure 4 presents information on the academic grade point average of students in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years.



No appreciable change was found in the academic average of Holy Cross School junior high students across the school years. In 1998-1999 the average was 68%, while the average for 1999-2000 was 69%.

Figure 5 presents information on the reported incidence of non-violent office referrals made during each academic year:



Complementing the substantial decrease in reported violent incidents is the change in the reported incidence of non-violent office referrals shown in Figure 5. In the 1998-1999 school year a total of two hundred and eighty non-violent office referrals were reported. In the 1999-2000 year a total of eighty-three office referrals were reported, reflecting a 70% reduction in the before and after measures.

### Survey Results

Figures 6, 7, and 8 present pretest and posttest data on student views of student behaviors.

Figure 6 presents information on the degree to which students perceived other students improving the learning environment, both before and during program implementation. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see students at Holy Cross School doing the following behaviors- Following the common rules of the school (# 5); Co-operating with teachers (# 8), Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School (# 15).

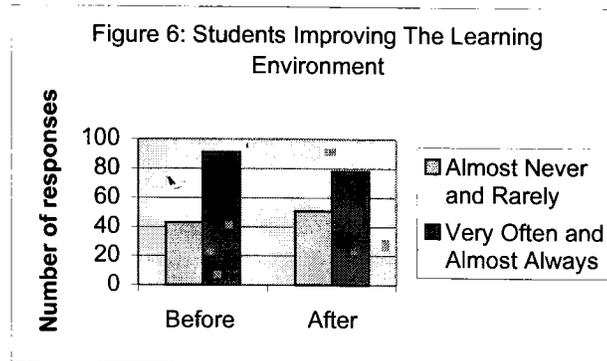


Figure 6 shows negative change from pretest to posttest in student views about the extent students improved the learning environment--from 12% (N=43) to 19% (N=51) on the “*Almost Never*” and “*Rarely*” category, and from 33% (N=91) to 28% (N=78) on the “*Very Often*” and “*Almost Always*” category.

Figure 7 presents pretest and posttest information on student views about the extent other students act in respectful ways. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see students at Holy Cross School doing the following: Showing respect for other students (# 1); Being courteous to other students (#2); Being considerate of other students' feelings (#3); Co-operating with school support staff (# 9); Coming on time for classes (# 10);

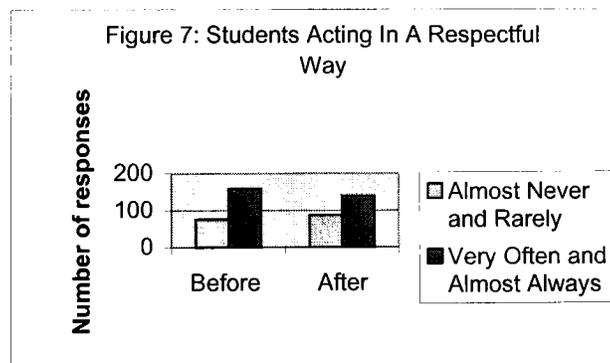
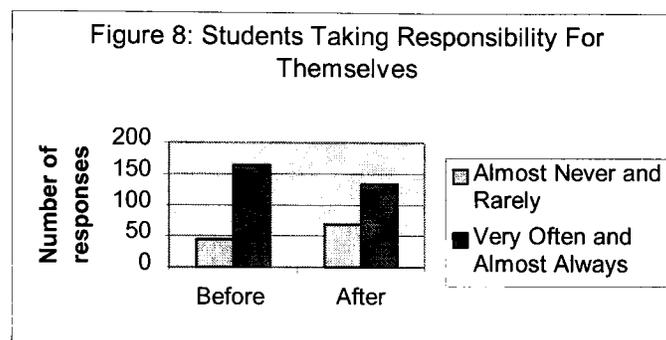


Figure 7 shows an increase in the number of students who perceived other students acting in respectful ways, from pretest to posttest-- from 16% (N=76) to 18% (N=87) in the “*Almost Never and Rarely*” category and a decrease from 33% (N=159) to 29% (N=140) in the “*Very Often and Almost Always*” category.

Figure 8 presents pretest and posttest information on student views about other students taking responsibility for themselves. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see students at Holy Cross School doing the following; Taking ownership for their own learning (# 6); Accepting responsibility for their actions (# 7); Dressing in a manner appropriate for school (# 11); Coming to school well groomed (# 12).



It is evident from reviewing Figure 8 that there was a slight increase from the pretest scores to the posttest scores in the “*Almost Never and Rarely*” categories-- from 11% (N=44) to 17% (N=68). For the positive statements of “*Very Often*” and “*Almost Always*” a negative change is evident-- from 40% (N=164) on the pretest down to 33% (N=134) on the posttest responses. In summary, this item indicates that students perceived a negative change following program implementation in the extent students took responsibility for themselves.

Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12 present pretest and posttest information about student perceptions of teacher behaviors. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see teachers at Holy Cross School doing the following: Acknowledging the efforts of students (# 18);

Being responsive to student needs (#19); Allowing students choices in what they want to learn in class (# 20); Allowing students choices in how to learn in the classroom (# 21); Encouraging students to try their best (# 22); Treating students as individuals (# 25); Helping students who need help (#26).

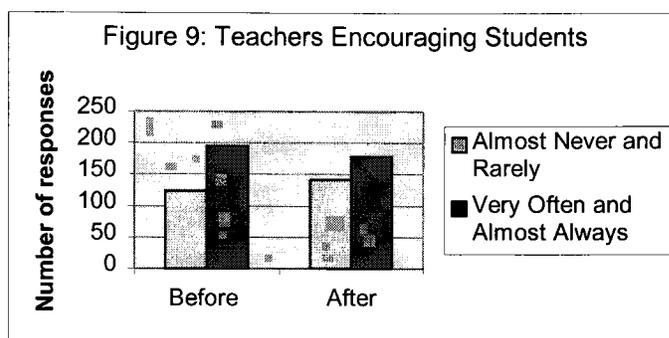


Figure 9 shows that there was a slight change from the pretest to posttest in student perceptions of the extent teachers were encouraging students. The “*Almost Never and Rarely*” responses increased -- from 19% (N=124) to 22% (N=141), while there is a slight decrease in the “*Very Often and Almost Always*” categories from 31% (N=195) to 28% (N= 178).

Figure 10 presents pretest and posttest information on student views of teachers communicating with stakeholders. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see teachers at Holy Cross School doing the following: Communicating with parents (# 17); Communicating with other teachers (# 23).

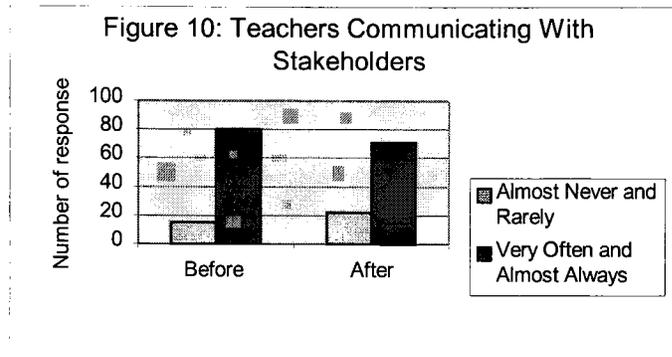


Figure 10 shows that there was an increase in the proportion of negative responses from 8% (N=15) to 12% (N=22). In a similar way, this Figure shows that there was a decrease in the proportion of positive responses from the pretest 43% (N=80) to the posttest 38% (N=71). In short, this information indicates that as a result of the program, students perceived teachers communicating less frequently with stakeholders.

Figure 11 presents pretest and posttest data on student views on whether teachers improved the learning environment. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see teachers at Holy Cross School doing the following: Integrating the Catholic faith into daily teaching (# 16); Treating students in a fair and just manner (# 24); Enforcing the common laws of the school (# 29); Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School (# 30).

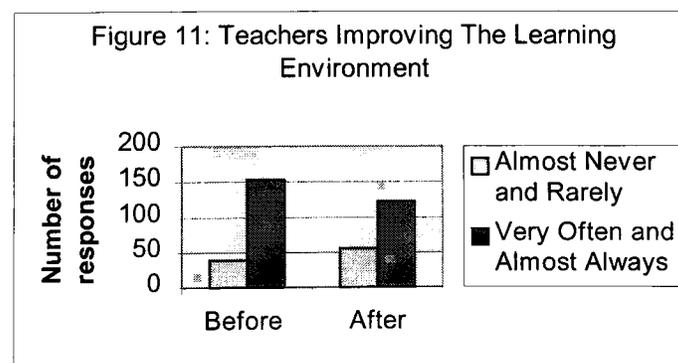


Figure 11 shows that there was a negative shift in student views about teachers improving the learning environment from before to after the program. Negative views increased from 11% (N=39) to 15% (N=55) from the pretest to the posttest, while positive views decreased from 41% (N=153) to 33% (N=122).

Figure 12 presents pretest and posttest information on the extent students perceived their teachers respecting them. The specific questions included in this grouping of responses are: Please give your opinion regarding the extent to which you see teachers at Holy Cross School doing the following: Showing respect for students (# 27); Being considerate of students' feelings (# 28).

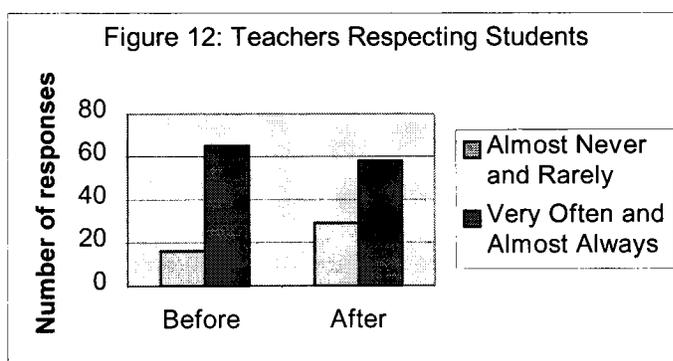


Figure 12 shows an increase in the negative views held towards teachers by the students -- from 10% (N=16) to 17% (N=29). Similarly a decrease is shown from the pretest to the posttest in the proportion of students holding positive views about the respect shown by teachers toward students -- from 39% (N=65) to 35% (N=58). Again students lowered their views about the respect given to them by their teachers after they had been exposed to the program, as compared to their views preceding program exposure.

## Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

### Results Summary

The pretest and posttest data presented here suggest a rather pessimistic view of the effects of the Community of Caring Program as implemented at Holy Cross School in the 1999-2000 academic year. While the data on the dependent variables showed a decrease in the number of reported violent and non-violent incidents in the school before and after program introduction, all of the student survey data show more negative student views both about other students and teachers after the program had been implemented. The posttest survey data, as compared to pretest data, show that students perceived other students as less often:

- Improving the learning environment;
- Acting respectfully;
- Taking responsibility.

The posttest survey data, as compared to pretest data, show that students perceived other students as more often acting in a respectful way.

Further, the posttest survey data, as compared to the pretest data, show that students perceived teachers as less frequently:

- Encouraging students;
- Communicating with stakeholders;
- Improving the learning environment;
- Respecting the students.

## Chapter VI: Explanatory Factors

In spite of the above results, it is important to keep in mind that there are a number of considerations which make it difficult to determine the extent it is possible to conclude that the Community of Caring Program, as the independent variable, is plausibly the cause of changes in the dependent variables (Campbell and Stanley, 1963).

### History

There may be outside events which affected the dependent variables and were not taken into account by the research design. Holy Cross School students were exposed to a variety of life events that may well have affected the posttest and there is no way of knowing how much, if any of the observed change in the dependent variables is a function of the independent variable and how much is attributable to these events.

### Maturation

This refers to changes taking place in study participants over time that affect the dependent variables. Adolescents change as they mature and the changes in the dependent variables may be due as much to this development as the intervention strategy. Furthermore, the very fact that the Community of Caring Program was implemented may have made students much more sensitive and alert to perceived negative aspects of their school environment. Accordingly, in the posttest they may have been much more critical even though the situation may have objectively improved.

### Testing

This refers to the effect that taking the pretest might have on the posttest scores. Students may have remembered some of the items on the pretest, thought about them later, and changed their views before completing the Community of Caring Program

activities. After the program, the posttest scores may reveal the changed views resulting from the experience with the pretest, not the program.

#### Instrumentation Error

This refers to all the problems that can affect the measurement process, including where, when, how, and by whom the measurements were made. The data based on administrative records are potentially subject to a variety of collection and reporting problems. The manner in which the questionnaire was administered in the eleven homeroom classes may well have varied in different ways. All of these potential situational differences could affect the results.

#### Reactive Effects

Changes in the dependent variables may have resulted from student reactions to the knowledge that they were participating in a research study. Peer participant behaviors may have been influenced not by the independent variable but by students' knowledge that they were part of a research project.

#### Selection-Treatment Interaction

This study did not include a random selection of participants. The fact that around one quarter of the parents returned the survey completed may have influenced the results in some manner. The parents who returned the signed forms were, in a sense, a select group. Either the parent or student was diligent enough to ensure that the form was signed and returned. These parents may be more likely to monitor their child's school progress and may value education more highly than do the parents who did not choose to return the authorization slip. As noted, the selection of respondents for the survey questionnaire ended up involving sixty-nine students out of a total population of two hundred and

twenty-four Holy Cross junior high students. The fact that a substantial number of parents would not sign and return the permission form allowing their children to participate in the study raises the question of the extent to which the study results can be generalized to the total junior high population at Holy Cross School or any other school.

#### Measurement-Treatments Effects

Because of administrative constraints, the pretest of the questionnaire was not administered until February of the 1999-2000 academic year, which is past the mid point of program implementation. The posttest was then administered in June, 2000 at the end of the program and school year. Therefore, the questionnaire only addressed those changes in student views during the last four months of program exposure. In short, measurement baseline was established after the students had been involved in the program for more than half the school year. This severely limits the extent one can generalize the results of this study to the Community of Caring Program as it might be implemented and studied in other places and times.

#### Final Considerations

Finally, two more considerations warrant exploration. One is that the effect of the Principal's half time absence had a cumulative effect, building through the school year and finding reflection in the June posttest scores. In support of this explanation is the researchers personal knowledge that there was a widely acknowledged view held by both teachers and students that in the last six weeks of the term, events were spinning out of control in the school. The second consideration has already been alluded to above under the heading of Maturation (pg.30). However, the point is worth re-emphasizing as it

offers a more positive perspective on the Community of Caring Program. It is possible that the program raised students' frames of reference for the core of values that go to the heart of the program. That is, the program sensitized students to the core values and heightened their sense of awareness to them and their expression in student and teacher behaviors. Consequently, because students were more aware, the gap between expectations and the behaviors seen around them seemed greater than before program exposure.

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Appendix A

The Survey

Please note: Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis only. You may refuse to participate in this study simply by not completing this questionnaire. Such refusal will not have any consequences whatsoever. Your data will remain strictly confidential and any reports of the results of the study will be completely anonymous.

Students are asked to complete this in order to give us information, so that we might better serve the Holy Cross School community.

***For each question, please place a check mark in the box which best reflects your opinion. Do not check off more than one box for each question.***

Part A. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see STUDENTS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

1. Showing respect for other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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2. Being courteous to other students

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

3. Being considerate of other students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

4. Interfering with other students' learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

5. Following the common rules of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

6. Taking ownership for their own learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

7. Accepting responsibility for their actions:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

8. Co-operating with teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

9. Co-operating with school support staff:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

10. Coming on time for classes:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

11. Dressing in a manner appropriate for school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

12. Coming to school well groomed:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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13. Engaging in verbal bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

14. Engaging in physical bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

15. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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Part B. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see TEACHERS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

16. Integrating the Catholic faith into daily teaching:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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17. Communicating with parents:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

18. Acknowledging the efforts of students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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19. Being responsive to student needs:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

20. Allowing students choices in what they want to learn in class:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

21. Allowing students choices in how to learn in the classroom:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

22. Encouraging students to try their best:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

23. Communicating with other teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

24. Treating students in a fair and just manner:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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25. Treating students as individuals:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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26. Helping students who need help:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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27. Showing respect for students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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28. Being considerate of students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

29. Enforcing the common laws of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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30. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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Appendix B  
School Authorization Package



# Holy Cross School

Telephone: 272-8732  
Fax: 272 5286

3719 - 26 AVENUE S.E., CALGARY, ALBERTA T2B 0C6

## AUTHORIZATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS IN CALGARY ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

Title of Research Study: The Community of Caring Initiative in Holy Cross School:  
Students' Perceptions

Type and Number of Subjects: Approximately 224 students in grades 7,8 and 9 attending  
Holy Cross School

Request for Particular Site: Holy Cross School

Timelines: November, 1999 to June, 2000

Nature of the Research Project: Please see attached research proposal

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent or designate)

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Phillippe St. Louis

### The Community of Caring Initiative in Holy Cross: School: Students' Perceptions

Holy Cross school, Calgary, is a high needs junior high school which elected to implement the Community of Caring initiative in the 1999/2000 school year. The Community of Caring program is built around five core values which empower young people to be responsible and caring members of a community. These are:

1. Caring is the opposite of both indifference and hate. Without caring, nothing matters.
2. People who care must be willing to take responsibility. That means they are accountable for their actions, enjoying praise when things go well and willing to accept blame when things go wrong.
3. If I take responsibility for myself, others will begin to respect me. I can also respect others who stand up for what they believe is right.
4. When people care for and respect each other, trust takes root and grows. If I trust you, I acknowledge that I need you for something, often support.
5. We begin to learn our values in our families, from the people we live with. Later our choices about love and sex create new families. We understand family to be the community that raises children, the community they leave to go to school, and the kind of community they may create themselves one day.  
(<http://communityofcaring.org/who.htm>)

Administrators and teachers at Holy Cross realize that our students often have a larger need for emotional and academic support than we had been able to give them in the past. We had been searching for some type of program to meet the following goals.

1. Reduce the number of violent issues that arise in our school.
2. Lower the truancy rate.
3. Increase the academic achievements of our students, as measured by grade point averages.

4. Lower the number of non-violent discipline issues surfacing in our school.

It must be noted that Holy Cross school has already experienced significant gains in these four areas over the last few year. However, the desire is to make continuing progress and the administration team felt that the Community of Caring was an effective method to enhance many things we were already doing. At our school there are many dedicated teachers who in practice already promote many of the Community of Caring concepts every day. We, as the administration team, saw the Community of Caring initiative as a tool that we could use to have the teachers use a common language with the children in both their encouraging and disciplining efforts.

We are also constantly looking for ways to better empower our students and have them take greater ownership in both the school and their education. Most of the promising character education research we had been looking at seemed to keep turning up the same key component: if there is a good relationship between the child and his/her community (including family, school and the general neighborhood) then that child is more likely to be successful in both emotional and academic matters. In other words, if children are made to feel like valued and respected members of a community then they are far more likely to engage with the community in a positive and meaningful manner.

Our initial concern, as the administration team, was getting sufficient staff support in order to realize the full potential of this program. We were convinced this was the program we needed for our school to significantly improve it and we wanted to ensure that the staff realized the potential and benefit of the program. We proceeded by playing a short informative video on the Community of Caring program at the final staff meeting of the 1998/1999 school year. We then planned to discuss with the staff the things we were already doing in the school that were components of the Community of Caring program.

We sent three of our staff members, including myself, who had expressed interest in being a part of the program to a two-day training program in order to familiarize them with the program. The next step was to organize a steering committee in order to get this program off to a running start.

After summer holidays the Principal, Vice Principal and myself began meeting regarding the Community of Caring initiative and worked toward gaining enough staff support to make this project really viable. Eventually we came up with the idea of tying our needs assessment in to our Code of Conduct document. The Code of Conduct was the result of five of our teachers getting together for a day and designing a document that they felt described what standards we would ideally see modeled at our school. This document was very well received by our teachers and the general Holy Cross community. We took the gist of the Code of Conduct, put it into a survey, and asked the teachers to rate the statements in two ways. Initially, we asked them to rate the statements in order of

importance from most important to least important and secondly we asked them to give a rating of how often they saw the characteristic displayed at Holy Cross utilizing a Likert scale.

The next step was to firm up the steering committee and actively pursue some community partners. This completed, we drew up a one year plan to effectively organize ourselves. Our year plan includes the following major components:

1. Values discussions to be held for 53 minutes every sixth day in our home room period, the goal here being to create an aura of awareness about the program. It will also be very useful to get all the teachers and the students in the building "speaking the same language".
2. Student forums, ideally, a minimum of two this year. The primary purpose of the student forums would be to ensure that the students realize that they have some say in what we are doing with the Community of Caring initiative and empower them.
3. Family involvement to give parents an opportunity to involve themselves in positively shaping their children's learning community.
4. Community service. As students begin to feel more valued and revered by the community I believe they will begin to take more pride in their community and want to engage more actively and positively with it. The challenge here would be to think of creative and symbiotic activities our students could undertake.

### The Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if grade 7, 8 and 9 students (244 in number) perceive an increase of behaviors in their fellow students and in teachers which facilitate a school climate characterized by elements such as mutual respect, courtesy, academic pursuit, safety, accountability, cooperation, communication, sense of community, meeting the needs of students, and acknowledgement of effort over the course of the Community of Caring Initiative at Holy Cross School.

Students will be asked to complete a survey twice in the 1999/2000 school year; once before the new year and again near the end of the school term. The instrument will be a 5 point Likert type scale (ranging from Almost Never to Almost Always). The questionnaire, which may be very slightly modified in further consultation with my supervisor, Dr. Mazurek, is as follows:

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Please note:** Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis only. You may refuse to participate in this study simply by not completing this questionnaire. Such refusal will not have any consequences whatsoever. By completing the questionnaire, you are granting permission to the researchers to use the data so provided for the study. Your data will remain strictly confidential and any reports of the results of the study will be completely anonymous.

---

For each question, please **place a check mark in the box which best reflects your opinion. Do not check off more than one box for each question.**

Part A. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see STUDENTS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

1. Showing respect for other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

2. Being courteous to other students

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

3. Being considerate of other students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
-----------------	--------	-------	------------	------------------

4. Interfering with other students' learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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5. Following the common rules of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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6. Taking ownership for their own learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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7. Accepting responsibility for their actions:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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8. Co-operating with teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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9. Co-operating with school support staff:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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10. Coming on time for classes:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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11. Dressing in a manner appropriate for school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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12. Coming to school well groomed:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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13. Engaging in verbal bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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14. Engaging in physical bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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15. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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Part B. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see TEACHERS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

16. Integrating the Catholic faith into daily teaching:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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17. Communicating with parents:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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18. Acknowledging the efforts of students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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19. Being responsive to student needs:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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20. Allowing students choices in what they want to learn in class:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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21. Allowing students choices in how to learn in the classroom:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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22. Encouraging students to try their best:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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23. Communicating with other teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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24. Treating students in a fair and just manner:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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25. Treating students as individuals:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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26. Helping students who need help:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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27. Showing respect for students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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28. Being considerate of students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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29. Enforcing the common laws of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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30. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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Appendix C

Parental Authorization Forms



# Holy Cross School

Telephone: 272-8732  
Fax: 272 5286

3719 - 26 AVENUE S.E., CALGARY, ALBERTA T2B 0C6

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian:

I am conducting a study of junior high school students' perceptions within the context of the Community of Caring Initiative in Holy Cross School. The title of the study is The Community of Caring Initiative in Holy Cross School: Students' Perceptions. The purpose of this study is to determine if students perceive an increase of behaviors in their fellow students and in teachers and staff which facilitate a school climate characterized by elements such as mutual respect, courtesy, academic pursuit, safety, accountability, cooperation, communication, sense of community, meeting the needs of students, and acknowledgement of effort over the course of the Community of Caring Initiative at Holy Cross School. I anticipate that your child and others will benefit from participation in this study by more explicitly and consciously thinking about and working toward creating a positive school climate.

I would like your permission for your child to participate in this study. As part of this research your child will be asked to complete a survey twice in this school year; once before the new year and again near the end of the school term. Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. When responses are released, they will be reported in summary form only. Further, all names, locations and any other identifying information will not be included in any discussion of the results. You also have the right to withdraw your child from the study without prejudice at any time.

If you choose to do so, please indicate your willingness to allow your child to participate by signing this letter in the space provided below, and return the letter to the school with your child.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (403) 272-8732. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study Dr. Kas Mazurek, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge, at (403) 329-2260 and/or any member of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information. The chairperson of the committee is Dr. John Poulsen, (403) 329-2463.

Yours sincerely,

Phillippe St. Louis  
Holy Cross School, Calgary (403) 272-8732  
(Please detach and forward the signed portion)

NAME OF PROJECT: The Community of Caring Initiative in Holy Cross School: Students' Perceptions

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

P.S. The survey is included on the following pages for your viewing.

## The Survey

Please note: Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis only. You may refuse to participate in this study simply by not completing this questionnaire. Such refusal will not have any consequences whatsoever. Your data will remain strictly confidential and any reports of the results of the study will be completely anonymous.

Students are asked to complete this in order to give us information, so that we might better serve the Holy Cross School community.

For each question, please place a check mark in the box which best reflects your opinion. Do not check off more than one box for each question.

Part A. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see STUDENTS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

1. Showing respect for other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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2. Being courteous to other students

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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3. Being considerate of other students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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4. Interfering with other students' learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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5. Following the common rules of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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6. Taking ownership for their own learning:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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7. Accepting responsibility for their actions:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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8. Co-operating with teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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9. Co-operating with school support staff:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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10. Coming on time for classes:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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11. Dressing in a manner appropriate for school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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12. Coming to school well groomed:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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13. Engaging in verbal bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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14. Engaging in physical bullying behaviour toward other students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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15. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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Part B. Please give your opinion regarding how often you see TEACHERS at Holy Cross School doing the following.

16. Integrating the Catholic faith into daily teaching:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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17. Communicating with parents:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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18. Acknowledging the efforts of students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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19. Being responsive to student needs:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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20. Allowing students choices in what they want to learn in class:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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21. Allowing students choices in how to learn in the classroom:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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22. Encouraging students to try their best:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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23. Communicating with other teachers:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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24. Treating students in a fair and just manner:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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25. Treating students as individuals:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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26. Helping students who need help:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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27. Showing respect for students:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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28. Being considerate of students' feelings:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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29. Enforcing the common laws of the school:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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30. Showing pride in being part of Holy Cross School:

ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
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